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The Week-end Review

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CONTENTS

COMMENTS . . . . . Page 453
THE FRANC, THE FRONT AND THE FUTURE . . . 456
GERMANY AND AUSTRIA 457
A LONDON DIARY 458
THIS ENGLAND 459
"THESE PRECIOUS JUSTICES." By Solicitor . . 459
SENSE OF SMELL. By Y. Y. 460
ON THE SPANISH FRONT 461
THE LARGER LUNACY. By Sagittarius . . . 463
CORRESPONDENCE 463
From Labour Worker; T. E. Naylor, M.P.; Jonathan Griffin; G. F. Shove; Lord Horder; J. B. Holman; Josephine Smith; Brig.-Gen. F. P. Crozier; Rt. Hon. J. R. Clynes, M.P.; Esther Roper; Barbarian; Henry W. Nevinson.
TWO PLAYS WORTH SEEING. By Desmond MacCarthy 466
COVENT GARDEN AS CONCERT HALL. By W. J. Turner 467
"MINE EYES DAZZLE." By Raymond Mortimer Page 468
PLAYS AND PICTURES 469
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By David Garnett . . . 471
REVIEWS:
St. George and the Soldiery. By Harold J. Laski 472
The Promised Land. By Michael Foot . . . 472
New Novels. By Peter Quennell 474
Stirrings. By Frederick Laws 476
Correspondents in Abyssinia. By G. T. Garratt . 478
English Church Screens. By John Betjeman . . 480
Education in Russia 480
Out-elbowing Space. By G. W. Stonier . . 482
SHORTER NOTICES 482
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS 484
CROSSWORD 487
THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Toreador . . . 488

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

SINCE the fall of Toledo on Sunday the rebels have been closing in steadily on Madrid. Their forces are advancing from the south-west and the west, and they threaten both the water supply and the line which runs south from the capital through Aranjuez—the Government's main line of communication with the Mediterranean ports. Preparations for a siege are being made as we write; food rationing has begun, and non-combatants are being evacuated to Valencia and elsewhere. There is no lack of men or spirit for the defence, but there is a woeful shortage of arms and ammunition and aeroplanes and tanks which are essential to-day in war. The insurgents are well equipped in this theatre of war as in others, and for their superiority they are largely indebted to the Fascist Powers who have aided them so handsomely, and to the democratic Powers who have refused to aid the Government. Señor Alvarez del Vayo at Geneva has completely exposed the tragic farce that Europe has played, and it is faintly possible that the "non-intervention" policy may even yet be called off. But the mischief that has already been done is incalculable.

The Challenge to Labour

The issue that confronts the Labour Party Conference at Edinburgh is the same that overwhelmed Labour everywhere in 1914. Can Labour always be relied on to fall in behind its opponents at the cry of national emergency? The emergency is real enough and needs, as Sir Walter Citrine rightly said of the Spanish issue, the use of our heads as well as of our emotions. But is not the suggestion that Labour should drop its opposition to the Government's war preparation based on the emotional appeal of nationalism and the distaste most people feel for sticking to their principles in times of difficulty and confusion? How difficult and complicated the problem is our correspondence columns again show this week. The fact that emerges from this long correspondence is that the issue of rearmament is only part of the wider issue. The proposal to co-operate in war preparation is widely assumed, as the warm welcome to Labour's "change of heart" in the Conservative press shows, to be a sign that Trade Union leaders are no longer in real opposition to the Government's foreign policy, and that Labour will accept the regimentation necessary for war, take the inevitability of war for granted and obediently toe the line whenever the old self-defence cry is raised again. It is this danger that lies behind the arguments of Sir Walter Citrine and Mr. Ernest Bevin. Yet the Labour

Party is pledged to resist all war unless it is forced on us as a result of applying the Covenant. Its past resolutions are meaningless if it co-operates with a Government which has never believed in the League idea. If Labour does abandon the war resistance side of its policy we are simply back again at the pre-war situation in which united national States stand threatening each other until the guns go off.

The United Front

This central issue will be debated at the Edinburgh Conference under the shadow of the Spanish war. The terrible farce of non-intervention has profoundly troubled the rank and file of Labour, and at last—when it is probably too late to effect anything—a demand has been sent to the Government for an inquiry into the operation of this one-sided neutrality. There are likely to be questions at the Conference about the concurrence of the Labour leaders in non-intervention, and especially into reasons why the Trades Union Congress was not told that a delegation was sent to the T.U.C. by the French Trade Unions to urge that the embargo should be lifted on our side when it was being obviously violated by the Fascist Powers. Apart from these international issues the main interest of the Conference will centre round the question of the "united front" and the treatment of the League of Youth, which has demanded a say in Labour's policy and which has been abruptly rebuffed since it showed signs of wanting a Popular Front. By deciding to reduce the age of eligibility in the League of Youth to 21 instead of 25, the official leaders of the Labour Party hope to get rid of the more energetic and troublesome Youth leaders. Incidentally, they are depriving the future leaders of the movement of an invaluable training ground. The "united front" is supported by a large number of divisional Labour Parties and some important Trade Unions, but it will be easily defeated. The other notable development is the increasing restiveness of the Divisional Parties, which object to the dominance of the Conference by the big Unions, which really decide the main lines of policy at the T.U. Congress before the Party Conference meets.

The League Discusses Itself

The discussions in the Assembly have brought out the divergencies of view among member States on the "reform" of the Covenant. The views of each nation are naturally dictated by self-interest—which may or may not be "enlightened" self-interest. Czechoslovakia is shy of "treaty revision," Canada of obligations in the European bear-garden, while another Dominion, New Zealand, is prepared for all the commitments of collective security. The most important speeches have been those of Mr. Eden and Mr. Litvinov. The latter stood plainly and boldly for the strengthening of the Covenant. The former was eloquent on general principles, but reticent on vital details, such as sanctions and the Eastern question. He declared that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the League; its failures had been due to lack of "universality," and to its weakness in the earlier stages of the crises which it had had to face. No doubt; but was not the British Government particularly to blame for this weakness, alike in the Manchurian and in the Abyssinian affairs? And as for "universality," it was not in fact the absence of certain States from the League, but the cowardice and disloyalty of those who were in it, which did the damage. Mr. Eden's reference to the importance of Article 19 of the Covenant, which deals with the revision of treaties, pleased some—especially Germany—and displeased others. We welcome it too, but should do so more heartily if he were equally clear about the interpretation of Article 16, which deals with the treatment of aggressors.

British and Russian Policies

The question that we still cannot answer, after reading and re-reading Mr. Eden's speech, is what the British Government's policy is going to be. They believe in the League. But how much and for what purpose? They favour regional pacts. But where? Will they be content with a Western pact and let the East go hang? They talk of Article 19, but what are they prepared to do about it? The Russian policy, on the other hand, was left in no doubt by Mr. Litvinov. Russia wants the League to be a "united front"—and a front with guts—of those who are for peace against those who are for war. And within the framework of this League Russia wants regional pacts of mutual assistance, and in particular, of course, one which will secure her. That, as we believe and as millions all over the world believe, is the best safeguard of peace that we can get. It does not mean the encirclement of Germany, unless Germany so wills. It does not mean injustice to Germany. Its object is simply to prevent aggression by Germany or anyone else. It can be, and ought to be, coupled with remedies for economic and political grievances which make for war.

The Currency Outlook

Since Holland and Switzerland followed France off the gold standard there has been a good deal of currency readjustment going on. Turkey, Greece and Latvia have joined the sterling bloc by deciding to pay their several currencies in a fixed relation to the pound. The sterling-dollar exchange has shown the expected tendency to assign a lower value to the pound, and this process seems likely to continue. Germany's policy was announced by Dr. Schacht in a speech on Tuesday. For the present Germany asserts her intention to maintain the mark at its present nominal parity. But a suggestion is thrown out that the Nazis might be willing to join in some wider international agreement for currency stabilisation at a later stage. Not much importance, however, can be attached to this offer, for it appears to be coupled, though in somewhat vague terms, with an assertion that any currency agreement would have to carry with it the concession to Germany both of a colonial empire and a readjustment of external debts. For the present, at any rate, Germany's system of rigid exchange control will remain unaltered. Italy appears to be following the same line. Mussolini has not yet made up his mind to eat his words of some years ago, when he declared that Fascism would never, never, devalue the sacred lira. In London gold has gone up in price in anticipation of a British policy of lowering the pound's dollar value. In France, M. Blum is pledged to control prices, and has for the moment bought Communist support by means of this pledge. In general we may expect a period of uncertainty during which each financial centre will be

watching eagerly what happens in the others. Even if in the end the fall of the gold bloc makes easier a return to international currency stabilisation, at new agreed values, the time for that is not yet. Perhaps it will come later on, perhaps never. Even if it does come it seems pretty certain that the gold standard will only be put back in a modified, and much less rigid, form.

Martial Law in Palestine

Following upon the Colonial Office statement of policy earlier in the month arrangements have now been made for the proclamation of martial law throughout Palestine. The new order gives the High Commissioner the right to delegate to General Dill power to make regulations for securing the public safety and defence of the country. These regulations cover such matters as censorship, arrest, the control of transport, the appropriation of property, the infliction of communal fines and the destruction of property as punitive measures. Military courts for the trial of offenders may be set up, and the orders of these courts, like the regulations themselves, will not be open to challenge or review elsewhere. The transference of power to General Dill has not yet taken place, but the knowledge that the Government is in earnest may influence the negotiations still proceeding between the Higher Arab Committee and the Arab Kings. The rumour still persists in Arab circles that the strike is to be called off in response to an offer from the Government to compromise on the issue of Jewish immigration. Such an offer seems highly improbable, and even if the strike is ended for this or some other reason, terrorism is likely to continue. The real pacification of the country must depend on whether Arab fears of eventual Jewish domination can be finally allayed. This will be the task of the Royal Commission, and its work will not have been made any easier by the stringent measures which the suppression has entailed.

The Nazis and Education

The Nazis have just issued a new decree confirming the period of compulsory labour service at six months, but increasing the numbers actually called up for service, and foreshadowing the introduction of compulsion for women as well as men. At the same time they are being compelled to face the economic consequences of the double system of conscription—two years in the army, plus six months in the Labour Corps. This means that, in the case of students entering the universities, schooldays are a long way behind before the university education can begin; and the university student cannot get his degree and start earning a living till he is 26, or even 28 or 29 if he takes a specialist course—for example, in medicine. In view of the economic difficulties which this late start involves, the Nazis have now decided to cut down the regular school course by a year; and they are said to be contemplating a similar curtailment of the university course, accompanied in this case by a lengthening of the term, so as to crowd the full course of study into a shorter period. Thus militarism takes its toll from education; and German standards of learning and culture, seriously affected already by the expulsion of politically or racially objectionable teachers and students, are to be further undermined in order to serve militarist ends. But presumably, nowadays, the German student needs to know only Nazi "truth"; and his six months' intensive education in Nazi principles in a Labour camp will more than make up even for two years' loss of school and university training.

The Road Transport Problem

Both the organised employers and the Trade Unions in the road transport industry want the State to institute compulsory regulation of wages, at any rate for a period of years. The chief reason for this agreement between the two sides is that the organised employers find themselves subject to continual undercutting of charges by unorganised firms, mostly small, which pay no attention to the standard conditions of wages and hours. At the committee of inquiry, which is now considering the matter under the joint auspices of the Ministries of Labour and Transport, the chairman, Sir James Baillie, put forward the curious suggestion that there should be no compulsory minimum wage, but that all the employers should be legally compelled to join the employers' organisation. Mr. Bevin pointed out in reply that this would also presumably involve compulsory Trade Unionism among the employees, which would raise a very big question of policy, both for the Trade Union movement and for the State. In effect, compulsory organisation would shift the obligation of securing the observance of standard wages and conditions on to the shoulders of the employers' organisation, without providing it with any means of enforcement. The State cannot evade its obligations in this fashion. Low wages and long hours in the road transport service increase the risk of accidents due to bad driving, and constitute a danger to the public. That alone, in the failure to observe the conditions voluntarily agreed upon by both sides, is a sufficient reason for instituting minimum standards enforceable by law.

The Gas Companies and the Consumer

The storm of protest against the South Metropolitan Gas Company's new tariff has now become so considerable that Mr. Runciman has been forced to take notice of it. He has told Mr. Morrison that the Board of Trade cannot intervene; but he says he will consider the desirability of bringing the matter before Parliament. The Company still claims that the change will benefit many of the poorest consumers; but, as the *Times* has pointed out, any benefit will be confined to those whose gas bill already amounts to more than 10*s.* a week. Three-quarters of the Company's customers have cash meters, and this class of consumer must be spending at least 17*s.* 6*d.* a month on gas if their gas charges are not to be increased in the future. Typical of the gas consumers everywhere are those on the Council estates, and, according to Mr. Silkin, M.P., 90 per cent. of the Council tenants getting gas from the Company will have to pay more, some of them as much as 3*s.* 6*d.* or 4*s.* a month. Twelve thousand Council tenants, apart from other consumers, are likely to be adversely affected. The Company's reply is that the small consumer is now only being supplied at a loss and that, if the fight with the electricity companies is to continue, he will have to suffer. This, however, is only a "commercial justification" which, as the *Times* makes clear, is not sufficient. If the private companies cannot subordinate the interests of profit making to those of the community, control should be transferred to some body which can.

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THE FRANC, THE FRONT AND THE FUTURE

THE franc has been so long about to fall that its actual descent comes necessarily as an anti-climax. Ever since 1931 the world has been wondering how long the French would keep up the struggle; and the wonder was intensified when M. Blum took office a few months ago. Pledged to the "reform" of the Bank of France, with its oligarchy of Regents, surely the Government of the Front Populaire would use its power, not merely to put new men into office at the Bank, but to institute a new financial policy? But "reform" was carried through, and the franc remained on gold at the same parity. M. Vincent Auriol, the Finance Minister, continued to declare that devaluation formed no part of the Government's policy; and the Communists, who are influential in the Trade Unions and essential to M. Blum's majority in the country, continued to denounce devaluation as a capitalist manoeuvre, and to threaten opposition if it were proposed.

In these circumstances gold left France not in a steady stream, but in a series of gushes each of greater magnitude than the last. The level of French prices was obviously out of adjustment with prices elsewhere and with the external value of the franc; and the attempts of M. Laval and his predecessors to meet the situation by reducing wages and internal prices had been given up as a failure. The economic policy of the Blum Government was one of expansion; but such a policy was bound to break sooner or later against the over-valued franc, by causing a still greater discrepancy between domestic and foreign prices. Almost everyone, both in France and elsewhere, felt that devaluation must come; and that feeling naturally accelerated the flight from the franc, which could not be stopped except by measures of exchange control that would have put France as much off the gold standard as Germany and Italy are to-day.

Nevertheless the Government held on, though every day's waiting reduced the advantages of devaluation by reducing the profit on revaluing the Bank's stock of gold. This profit, which will accrue to the Government, will still be enough to put it in financially easy circumstances for some time to come; but it will be not much more than half what it might have been if devaluation had been carried through a year or so ago. Even so, it will enable M. Blum to finance rearmament and economic expansion without calling on the taxpayers, and to afford the salary increases necessitated by increases in the cost of living.

The causes of France's tardiness in resorting to an obvious way of easing, if not ending, her economic difficulties are well enough known. The existence of a very large class of small rentiers and pensioners, mainly dependent on incomes from the State; Trade Unionists' fears of a rising cost of living which they would not be strong enough to cancel by wage-increases; above all, the fact that the franc had already been written down to a fifth of its pre-war gold value, and that there were widespread fears that a new devaluation would be the prelude to a series of further "adjustments"—all these factors made French politicians, who are highly sensitive to local public opinion, most unwilling to urge or take a course that could be easily represented as a breach of faith. Had not M. Poincaré promised, when he devalued, that the thing had been done once and for all?

A French Government, even a Front Populaire Government, dared not devalue as a matter of policy. It had to wait, as the British Government waited in 1931, to be actually driven off gold; and in its case the suspense lasted many times as long. The situation, now that it has arisen, is very different from that which faced Great Britain five years ago. Then, broadly, the rest of the world was "on gold." Now not one country is, though a few, under cover of nullifying restrictions, still pretend that they are. The British departure from the gold standard had to be an autonomous action, decided without formal agreement with other countries; and circumstances were such that it was almost out of the question to adopt a new parity in place of the old. Great Britain did not "devalue" sterling—for devaluation implies a new parity. Sterling was allowed to depreciate, while we waited to see what other countries would do.

Then followed, first, the creation of a "sterling area," by the action of Scandinavian and Empire countries in linking their currencies to the pound, and secondly, the suspension of the gold standard in the United States. During the Roosevelt experiment the sterling-dollar exchange fluctuated widely, and no one knew for a long time what the Americans meant to do. Then the dollar settled down, and there ensued a period of *de facto* stabilisation (albeit within wider margins than of old) in which pound, dollar and franc came again to have relatively fixed values.

But though exchange fluctuations were limited, no real equilibrium was restored. The franc was plainly out of adjustment, and the dollar, virtually fixed again in gold value, bore an equivocal relation to sterling in view of the changing level of American internal prices. For some time it has been said in this country that, while the franc was over-valued in relation to both pounds and dollars, the dollar was under-valued in terms of the pound. There has been talk of letting the pound fall further in terms of dollars; but it has been impossible to do this without aggravating the difficulties of the franc.

It has been clear for some time past that it would be a good deal easier for French politicians to devalue if they could do so in pursuance of an agreed international policy of monetary adjustment than it could be if they had to act alone. The consciousness of this fact lay behind the discreet wording of the recent report of the League's Financial Committee; and it is common knowledge that for many weeks "conversations" have been going on not only between Paris, London and New York, but also between these centres and Berlin. Dr. Schacht's recent visit to Paris was undoubtedly concerned largely with this issue, which vitally affects trading relations between France and Germany.

In the event, the French got their agreement, in the documents issued by the British and American Governments a few days ago. From current comment in Berlin it appears that Germany was not even privately a party, even if Dr. Schacht would have liked her to be; for the Nazis, like Mussolini, have made so many promises not to devalue that it is hard for them to eat their words. Moreover, the extreme Nazis favour the currency isolation which the present exchange control involves, and regard it as a part of the policy of "economic nationalism."

But, without Germany, the other three countries have acted. Great Britain appears to be pledged not to use the devaluation of the franc as an excuse for decreasing further the value of sterling. But we are certainly not pledged to maintain the existing sterling-dollar rate, so that a further fall in the pound is in fact likely. The United States will presumably for the present keep the dollar where it is in gold value, and the French will give themselves plenty of play before they attempt to fix a new definite gold value for the franc. They will do this, because they want to see first both how French internal prices react, and how Great Britain and other countries handle their own currencies in the new situation.

On balance, there can be no doubt that the fall of the franc is a good thing. It has made a final end of the "gold bloc"; for Holland and Switzerland were forced at once to follow suit. It should make possible both economic expansion inside France and a relaxation of the restrictions which now limit the recovery of foreign trade. Immediately, it may hit certain British exporters; but if France recovers economically, they stand to gain in the long run much more than they can lose now.

The only real danger is in France itself. The Communists have, for the present, accepted devaluation in return for M. Blum's assumption of power to control prices—which they prefer to the sliding wage scale originally proposed. But will they, angry as they are with him over his policy of non-intervention in Spain, try to get back on him later by denouncing him for lowering the real incomes of the French masses, as soon as prices show any sign of rising in spite of his efforts? Secondly, will the Radical-Socialists turn on M. Blum and accuse him of betraying the "small man" by an indirect confiscation of his savings? They, too, have mostly voted for him this week; but a section of the Radical Right, which hates the Front Populaire, is already trying to make itself nasty. How far it will succeed will hardly be known till the Radical-Socialist Congress meets in late October. M. Blum will then have to meet the crisis occasioned by the Senate's mutilation of the devaluation bill. After the Chamber's rejection of the Senate's amendments it remains to be seen whether the Senate will give way. The best hope is that M. Blum may be able by then to show that the rise in prices has been only moderate, and the expansion of economic activity considerable. At all events, he has done only what he had to do; and it is to be hoped that the French people, who have plenty of political intelligence, will realise that fact and allow him to carry through the constructive measures which logically follow on revaluation.

GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

[FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRIA]

SUPERFICIALLY Austria has changed very little this year. Though there is peace with Nazi Germany and the five German newspapers are everywhere displayed, one could not for a moment mistake this country for the Reich; indeed it seems as slovenly and friendly as ever. One observes that where until recently Heimwehr or Catholic militiamen were on guard in Vienna, there are now only regular soldiers and regular police. There are other straws to show which way the wind is blowing. Since the spring Schwarzschild's anti-Nazi *Tagebuch*, for instance, has disappeared from the newspaper stalls; the wind, however, blows gently, and inside a stationer's shop one can still buy the *Tagebuch*, though cautious people would probably prefer not to do so. On the other hand, papers like the *Deutsche Volksblatt*, which is almost frankly Nazi and whose anti-Semitism is not unworthy of Herr Streicher himself, are more evident than they were. The immensely successful tourist season this summer gives an impression of prosperity which is gradually fading away as September passes. The lifting of the German thousand mark tax in August has proved merely disappointing for the innkeepers and hotel-keepers, since most of the Germans who came had only 10 marks to spend. Though an agreement has been made that German visitors to Austria shall be able to provide themselves with 500 marks a month, "for the time being" only 250 marks are to be available to a limited number of people, and the German exchange situation shows no signs of improving as yet.

Even apart from the provoking poverty of the tourists from Germany—a circumstance which destroys the illusion that Germany is paradise—everyone is talking about the Agreement with Germany and what results it will bring. The Eleventh of July, when the Agreement was signed, has already taken its place in the Austrian calendar as the most significant date since the day when the Nazis murdered Dollfuss two years before. There are only very few people here in Vienna, however, who have observed how neatly the Austro-German Agreement preceded the outbreak of the military and Fascist revolt in Spain by one week. It is clear that the German generals were eager to make sure of Austria from a military point of view at almost any price, but this in itself would not account for Hitler's last-minute surrender to all Schuschnigg's demands. It is known, however, that Germany had a share in provoking the conflict in Spain, and it is only too evident that the Spanish Civil War is Hitler's Reichstag Fire for the benefit of Europe. It has worked out splendidly in Austria. Just after the five newspapers from the Reich began to cross the frontier, they arrived big with the iniquities of Russia's henchmen in Spain. A Germany which denounced the enemies of the Spanish Church was utterly reassuring to the powerful group of pro-German Catholics whose mouthpiece is the *Reichspost*. They apparently forgot about the predicament of the Catholic Church in Germany, until on September 16th a *Reichspost* leading article did suggest that the fight against godless Russia should be unaccompanied by godless persecutions of Christians in Germany. The struggle between Clericals and anti-Clericals in Austria was successfully glossed over, for the pro-German anti-clerical professional and business people were of course delighted that on the Eleventh of July Austria had backed the anti-Communist—indeed the Right—horse in the nick of time. Though people of this kind found the pronouncements of Adolf Hitler at Nürnberg unnecessarily sensational, they felt surer than ever that his heart is in the right place. There is no doubt that this complex of events with propaganda has strengthened Germany's hold upon Austria, and that the Reichswehr people are determined to tighten their grip; people concerned with armaments industries report the first signs of a German push towards the standardisation of military equipment.

Unless war breaks out, however, the *Gleichschaltung* of Austria is likely to develop slowly. There is still a good deal of irritation and anxiety in Austria. Many industrialists are afraid of the closer economic relations with Germany which are now foreshadowed. There are powerful Catholics like Richard Schmitz, the Mayor of Vienna, who have no confidence in Hitler's word, and Herr von Schuschnigg himself is not altogether reassured. Sometimes one wonders what can have induced someone quite so Clerical as Schuschnigg to accept the Eleventh of July. Of course, the Austrian Chancellor is "German-conscious" with Tyrolese suspicion of Italy, and it is clear that his political preference is Fascist. But the more exact argument which carried the day with him and with his confidant and new Foreign Secretary, Guido Schmidt, was as follows: War in Europe is inevitable. If Austria is on friendly terms with Germany she will suffer

perhaps nothing much worse than a German occupation. If, on the other hand, she were caught up in any other constellation, Germany could utterly destroy her. There is some anxiety in Vienna as to whether Hitler wishes to provoke a war very soon, before Poland and Great Britain have repaired their military weakness.

In some ways the most interesting phenomenon in Austria at the moment is the behaviour of Italy. It is possible that Italy's share in the Eleventh of July has been exaggerated. It is certain that Italy is now strengthening every anti-German weapon in her armoury. Austria's relation to Italy has just been emphasised by Dr. Schmidt's visit to Rome, and there is soon to be a conference of the Rome protocol powers in Vienna; there is no suggestion that Germany is to be invited to join them. On the contrary, in answer to the Nazi demand for an anti-Russian bloc, Italy has been negotiating with Prague.

In Austria itself the attitude of the Italian Legation in Vienna is encouraging to all anti-Nazi groups, from the now rather disconsolate Legitimists to the Left-wing Catholics, and even—it is whispered—the Communists. Communist policy, as one might expect, is developing along the lines of "Une Autriche, libre, forte et heureuse . . ." Since July 11th the Communists have, in fact, been attempting a wide co-operation with all anti-Nazi groups which are not uncompromisingly opposed to social reform. Towards the Schuschnigg regime the Communists also wish to behave in a conciliatory manner in order, of course, to capture the official United Trade Union. The Revolutionary Socialists, though equally alarmed by July 11th, are strongly opposed to Front Populaire tactics in Austria. They are convinced that nothing but Fascism can be expected from Schuschnigg, who has consistently refused to make any genuinely democratic concession, and under whose rule capitalist recovery is accompanied by deterioration in working-class conditions. The Government this year has drastically cut down expenditure on housing and work creation schemes without any apparent justification. Elections of workers' representatives—the first elections since 1933—are to be held in the factories early next month, but since the candidates are officially chosen and no one who has ever served any kind of political sentence will be eligible, the Socialists intend to cross out all the names on the lists. The available evidence suggests that the majority of the working people are still Socialist rather than Communist, and the distribution of Socialist literature has certainly increased this year as compared with last. Socialist-Communist difficulties are continuing; recently, for instance, the Socialists have refused to approve of the Moscow trial. It seems peculiarly sad that here in Austria, where in democratic days Otto Bauer succeeded in avoiding a Socialist split, the working people should to-day be bitterly divided in the struggle against advancing National Socialism.

Among organised National Socialists the Eleventh of July was very variously received. Some felt betrayed; others rejoiced to see the Wooden Horse drawn proudly into Troy. Politically their organisations are not important in themselves, but, through a large number of Gestapo agents, they remain in touch with the authorities in the Reich. The sincerity with which Hitler surrendered cannot be supposed to have been even temporarily complete by anyone familiar with Nazi theories and Gestapo technique. A letter dated July 15th and circulated to all its branches by the Berlin headquarters of the Deutschen Studentenschaft probably expresses the German view of July 11th as exactly as possible. There it is declared that the immediate goal must now be an independent but Nazi Austria, and that the methods now to be used are to be *weltanschaulich*—that is to say, a Nazi and specifically anti-Catholic point of view must be instilled through theatre, film, press and wireless, and through the German tourists. Austrian youth must be influenced through University students and schoolmasters. Austria must also be closely bound to Germany through economic ties. This is a practical programme. An Austrian representative is already in Berlin discussing film co-operation. A commercial agreement is under consideration. It is difficult to suppose that the Vatican or the Quirinal can do more than retreat like Canute before the incoming tide.

Vienna, September, 1936.

A LONDON DIARY

LAST Sunday's newspapers spread Russia thick all over their main news page. The *People* ran an exclusive story that Zinoviev and his fellow conspirators have not really been shot at all, but are now employed as Secret Service Agents by the Soviet Government. But most of the papers concentrated on Mr. Morgenthau's gentlemanly rebuke to the Soviet Government for selling a million pounds of sterling. As Sunday reading this story might pass; how large a percentage of the British public would know that Mr. Morgenthau was concerned not about the truth or about Russia or about gentlemen, but about damaging Mr. Roosevelt's election chances? Mr. Morgenthau follows Mr. Hearst's lead in wishing to persuade the American public that Mr. Roosevelt is really a Bolshevik agent, and anything that associates wickedness with Bolsheviks suits his brief. But the joke was to see the way in which Monday's newspapers gently revealed the fact that the Russian Government had been engaged in an ordinary everyday transaction of selling sterling—a relatively trivial sum—in order to obtain dollars to pay a debt to Sweden. This commonplace operation was called by one bright Sunday paper an attack by Russia on the British working-man's savings! The *Times* Washington correspondent corrected Mr. Morgenthau and the London press in a phrase of classical suavity. He wrote in Monday's *Times*:

> It is fair, however, to say that inquiries made later in the day helped to establish the conviction that the Russian offer was less unfriendly than a matter of routine protection. . . .

Now isn't that a charming way of saying that the whole thing was just a damned lie?

* * *

Mr. Eden's references to "raw materials" and the economic co-operation of States were only one degree less vague than Sir Samuel Hoare's abortive remarks to the Assembly just a year ago. But I hear that there is, this time at least, one definite proposal really under consideration. It is a scheme for revising the Ottawa Agreements in such a way as to benefit Central Europe—which really means Germany. Anything that would ease the present tension would be welcome. But surely the right method is to begin with a system of economic co-operation and tariff reductions which would begin inside the League and which Germany could come into if and when she wanted. The League is now a dead thing unless it becomes an economic League which nations actually gain by joining.

* * *

A friend just back from the war gives me a disturbing account of an interview he had in Spain with a French delegation which had been to investigate the state of affairs in French Morocco. According to them the French officers in Morocco—some of them sent there because of their politics, just as Spanish officers were sent to Spanish Morocco—were openly talking of a *putsch* in France on the model of Franco's in Spain. I hesitate to put great reliance on this until I have further confirmation. In any case the victory of Franco will be an immense encouragement to every group of adventurers in Europe, and with Germany to back a *putsch* and Spain to act as a base against France, as Portugal has acted against Spain, the chances of a Fascist coup in France are greatly increased. It is certainly common talk in France, and the constant seizure of arms which are being run over the Swiss frontier to Fascists suggests that it is not idle talk. But I scarcely think such an attempt likely unless the Blum Government gets into serious difficulties and the Front Populaire shows signs of disintegrating. The rank and file of the French army is overwhelmingly "Left." And it would not be so easy to transport African troops to France as it was to Spain.

Of all the books I've read on prisons, Mr. Macartney's *Walls Have Mouths* strikes me as the most likely to do good. It is not "sensational"; it is absorbingly interesting and generally convincing. It might, I think, have the same kind of effect on the mind of a sensitive Home Secretary that Galsworthy's *Justice* is said to have had on Mr. Winston Churchill. It might, that is to say, show a Home Secretary how to abolish, by the simple exercise of a little intelligence, a whole mass of quite senseless cruelty, due usually not to malice but to an out of date theory, rigidly and stupidly applied. Let him just think over the moral of the story of the introduction of chess into Parkhurst, the moral of the few weeks in which the food was properly cooked in Parkhurst, the explanation alleged of the Dartmoor mutiny and the picture we get here of a prison governor of quite unusual ability, intelligence and humanity struggling to interpret idiotic rules with a measure of sense. Mr. Macartney is surprisingly free from bitterness and pays warm tributes, not only to Captain Clayton, but also to those warders who remained fine human beings in spite of their jobs. On this point I was amused by a pontifical letter in the *Times* from a Mr. Watson, the Hon. Secretary of the National Association of Prison Visitors. Constituting himself the gaoler's defender, he enters the lists to protest against the suggestion that the job of gaoler is not attractive to sensitive and imaginative people! "Visitors," of course, know all about warders; prisoners, one gathers, are incompetent to give an opinion—as the ploughman remarked to the toad after he had passed by with the harrow. I cannot believe that the majority of prison visitors, many of whom are excellent people, will welcome Mr. Watson's letter. Why, instead of bombinating in the *Times*, does he not use his unusual opportunities to inquire into the substance of Mr. Macartney's criticisms?

* * *

The October issue of the *London Mercury* appears in an improved format. I like the lay-out of the orange cover, and the changes of type and the new double column page for the reviews are all to the good. The first article is by Bernard Shaw, an energetic and effective piece about the censorship of the film version of his St. Joan by the Catholic Action in the United States. This society apparently claims to have absolute control over some twenty million American Catholics and producers dare not put out a film which would, they say, lead to an extensive boycott of all cinemas that showed it. G.B.S. does not protest against all censorship: he accepts it as a necessity, but complains that the suggestions of the Catholic Action would destroy the meaning of his play, distort history, do a grave disservice to the Church, which certainly comes out very well—perhaps rather too well from the strictly historical point of view—in his version of Joan's trial. He urges the trade to insist on the control of film morality "being made a Federal matter, independent of prudes, of parochial busy-bodies and doctrinal enemies of the theatre as such. As to the method of the control, there is only one which has proved sensible and practicable. Have your picture houses and theatres licensed from year to year by the local municipal corporation, with power to the corporation to discontinue the licence on evidence that the house is ill-conducted or for other 'judicial reasons.'" Please, Mr. Shaw, will you explain a little further? Why would this local licensing control be "Federal" and why would it avoid prudes, parochial busybodies and doctrinal enemies of the theatre?

* * *

One feels inclined to chalk up at least one mark for civilisation when one reads that two scientists have been rewarded by the International Congress Against Cancer with a prize of £350 and 50 milligrammes of radium. The two scientists are both British—Professors Kennaway and Cook of the Research Institute of the Royal Cancer Hospital. Here is an actual case of an *international* Congress rewarding people, and the reward, given for constructive work against disease, taking the form of radium which will aid further research. Contrast the daily rewards of titles and frills and positions for people whose services are purely national and often for thinking of ways of killing people more unpleasantly and in larger numbers.

* * *

Sir John Ellerman has left an estate of £36,000,000. Shipping, notoriously in a bad way, does, after all, pay a living wage. If Sir John had still been alive, he would have been benefiting by a State subsidy.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. J. D. K. Lloyd.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

From the British point of view the Cypriots have been too little conscious in the past of their membership of the British Empire. Permanent contact with the Imperial forces and the constant presence of British aeroplanes and warships would give them a different outlook. —*Times.*

I do not hate the Irish. I despise the Southern Iberian Irish as useless thieves, murderers, cattle-maimers and moonlighters.—Mr. C. G. Grey in the *Aeroplane.*

A COLLECT FOR IDEALISTS

Earnestly we beseech Thee, O Father, that Thou wilt overthrow this wicked "National" Government, which is responsible for the terrible happenings in China and Abyssinia, and which panders to so much that is mean, base, crude and cruel, both at home and abroad. Make speed to help us, O God. And show me my duty in this connection. O use me, Lord, use even me, just as Thou wilt, and when, and where.—*Leaflet.*

My attention has been drawn to a sensational new book entitled "Walls Have Mouths." It is one of the most savage and insensate attacks on prison life that I have ever read. The author is W. F. R. Macartney, an individual, I observe, who makes no secret of the fact that he recently emerged from Parkhurst Prison after serving a ten years' sentence on charges of espionage.—Rt. Hon. J. R. Clynes in *John Bull.*

Our readers may have noticed that under the charming photograph of Lady Derwent reproduced in our last week's issue, we published the statement that she married Lord Derwent in 1919. This, of course, was a misprint, and we take this, the earliest, opportunity of correcting it. Lord and Lady Derwent were, as everyone knows, married in 1929.—*Sketch.*

. . . Sir Thomas (Astley) was a cousin of Simon de Montfort and a member of the Council of Barons. Astleys have distinguished themselves ever since—including Sir Ralph who was knighted by the Black Prince at the Battle of Crecy and the present Peer's father who bred Melton and won the Derby with him in 1885. . . .—*Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic.*

In the golden days when I was young and beautiful . . .—Lady Houston, D.B.E., on the cover of the *Saturday Review.*

"THESE PRECIOUS JUSTICES"

THE recent case in which a bench of lay magistrates was referred to as "these precious justices" and their decision criticised apparently without justification is a good example of the danger of saying what is known to be true but using an unverified instance as the text. That magistrates have in the past imposed unduly heavy penalties without proper consideration can hardly be denied, in view of the Report of a Departmental Committee and the Money Payments (Justices Procedure) Act of 1935 passed as a result thereof. That they continue to do so, notwithstanding the Act, is notorious to all who attend the courts, although the results of their action are now less disastrous. A short time ago a provincial bench dealt with 75 motoring offences in an hour. Another bench dealt with 200 in one day. These are typical instances. It is obvious that no proper consideration can have been given to individual cases. In another court the penalty for exceeding

the 30-mile an hour limit was 10s. on Mondays, 20s. on Wednesdays and 40s. on Fridays until press ridicule made an end of the practice. It is doubtful whether the Act of 1935 will make as great a reduction in the number of persons imprisoned as was expected, for in the writer's experience a certain number of men who would formerly have been fined have been given imprisonment without the option of a fine. The Money Payments Act was not welcomed by the part-time magistrates' clerks in the provinces, because of the extra work which it gave them. They were no longer able to say, as one part-time clerk almost invariably did in response to a request for time, "This isn't the County Court, you know." But the whole-time clerks, in my experience, accepted the Act from the beginning, and the others are beginning to settle down.

The scandal of the part-time clerk remains, however. Admitted even by the Government to be an evil, 890 out of 940 clerks to the justices are in private practice, free to advise their benches in cases in which their own clients are concerned, to prosecute for the police in each other's courts, and to reap a rich harvest from the Breweries and Insurance Companies which hasten to instruct them in licensing and motoring cases. It is only fair to add that many part-time clerks are meticulous in their care to avoid anything of this kind, although even they cannot always avoid the appearance of evil. A number of clerks, too, are as old and deaf as the justices whom they advise. Owing sometimes to their infirmities, and sometimes to their natural desire to get back to their private work, they rush the work of their courts, and in their impatience frequently insult and upset the unfortunate defendants who appear before them. The other day I heard a woman applying for a separation order on the ground of desertion. It was near the luncheon hour. The woman had not been in the box more than a couple of minutes at the outside when the clerk cut her short with some question as to why her husband had left her. She was, naturally enough, a little voluble in her reply. The clerk interposed, "How long have you been married?" "Twenty years," said the woman. "He must have been a brave man to stick it that long," was the clerk's reply, followed by laughter in Court. Needless to say the woman belonged to the poorer working class. Not long ago I was in another provincial court, and made notes of a few of the clerk's remarks. To a defendant in a motoring case, who had denied a statement he was alleged to have made after a collision, he said, "You don't admit it now because you realise your position." In another case the same clerk told a defendant who had denied what was put to him by the prosecuting solicitor—himself clerk to a neighbouring court—"It's no use your arguing it. It must be so." Another witness was asked by the prosecuting solicitor what he would give to a drunken person to bring him round. On the witness replying, "Pure raw tea, without sugar," the clerk, in a loud bullying voice, exclaimed, "Don't prevaricate." Another witness, who said he had not understood the statement he had signed, was told by the clerk, "Oh no, no, we're not having that." These were a few examples noted at the time.

Prosecutions are in many courts conducted by the police. The following is a record of what was actually said by a police constable, examined by his superior officer, in giving evidence against a defendant who had pleaded "Not guilty" to being on enclosed premises for an unlawful purpose. "Your Worships, P.C. Blank, number blank. I was, Sir. Yes, Sir, I did, Sir. They were standing on the path. Spiked iron railings. Yes, Sir. I was, Sir. Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. I did, Sir. Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. They did, Sir. Yes, Sir. They looked towards me and ran the other way. Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. I did, Sir."

The evidence of an officer called to corroborate, and not in court while the other constable was in the box, was as follows:

"Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. All of them."

I made a note at the time. The clerk's note was doubtless very different from mine. There was no advocate for the defence. This illustrates the manner in which the justices carry out their duties with regard to the way in which evidence is presented by the prosecution. Leading questions of course save time, which appears to be considered of far greater importance than the rules of evidence.

Advocates for the defence are continually accused of wasting time if they question a witness for the prosecution at any length. Lay justices apparently do not realise that in his own interest any "police court" solicitor will get a case over as quickly as is possible consistent with his duty to his client. Refreshers are unknown in ordinary cases before the justices. Witnesses for the defence are often reminded, sometimes by the bench and sometimes by the police, of the penalties of perjury. In a long experience of the summary courts I cannot remember hearing any bench administer a similar warning to a witness for the prosecution, while even a mild suggestion that a police witness may be mistaken is usually regarded as insulting, notwithstanding the Lord Chief Justice's comments on this point.

Age and infirmity on the bench continue to hinder justice. The Lord Chancellor is reluctant to appoint men of advanced age as magistrates, but those already on the bench remain. The other day a magistrate of 97 announced his intention of returning to sit as a member of a bench the chairmanship of which he had vacated at the age of 94. It should be borne in mind that it is not only the frequent infirmity of these venerable gentlemen that causes injustice, but their ignorance of and lack of sympathy with modern conditions and the younger generation. Motorists are the most vocal of those who complain of the lay magistrates and their decisions. They have less reason to do so than other classes of sufferers, for not only are they usually represented by advocates and have the means to appeal, but in many places special days are set apart for the hearing of charges against motorists. By the working classes injustice is taken as a matter of course if they cannot afford to be legally represented. And this is not a healthy state of things.

SOLICITOR

SENSE OF SMELL

I SEE that one of the exhibits at the Inventions Exhibition, now being held at Olympia, is an apparatus for synchronising smells with pictures in the cinema. "For instance," we are told, "when a scene of a field of violets is shown, violet perfume is released in the building." Remembering how unreasonably I disliked both the gramophone and wireless when they were first invented, and my failure to foresee how much pleasure I should one day owe them, I cannot help wondering whether I am justified in viewing with horror the prospect of the arrival of the scented film. And yet I do regard it with the intensest dislike. For one thing, there are few things more unpleasant than the smell of cheap perfume, and I doubt whether the ordinary cinema-manager would go to the expense of providing any but the cheapest perfume. For another thing, if we are to have smells in the picture-theatre, the realists are sure to come along and demand in the name of Art or Truth or something else with a capital letter, that we shall have the disagreeable as well as the agreeable smells. Producers who send whiffs only of the agreeable smells through the theatre will be accused of playing down to the desire for "escape" and for indulgence in fantasy so common in vulgar minds. To dislike the smell of a gas-escape will then be regarded as a sign of moral and intellectual cowardice, and the man who prefers the smell of roses and honeysuckle to the smell of cooking in a bad restaurant will be laughed at as a sickly sentimentalist.

In the arts I confess I desire to escape from many things, and one of these is the smell of gas-escapes. I do not even like the smell of a stale egg. I would rather smell the sweet south that breathes upon a bank of violets than the malodorous lukewarm breeze that greets you at the entrance of some tube stations. Yet, if the scented film comes into being, I foresee we shall have to endure in the theatre all the odours that we

can scarcely tolerate in life. If we go to a film in which at one point the Little Man returns home after a hard day's work to his evening meal, we, as well as he, shall be met at the door by the awful stench of the cauliflower that is being boiled by a woman who does not know how to counter the odour. If the film takes us among country scenes, again, we shall be shown pictures of cabbage-fields at the time of year when decaying cabbages give off fumes that poison the air for the passer-by, and we shall have to endure the fumes or leave the theatre. A film of Venice, in order to be realistic, will have to show us a gondola progressing along one of those narrow canals—which are the Venetian equivalent of back-streets—during low tide on an oppressive day in August, and will have to let us know in an unmistakable manner what a Venetian back-canal can smell like at low tide in August. For myself, I am not so avid of experience for its own sake as to wish to be reminded of this.

There have been occasions in the past on which ingenious men have proposed to elevate the sense of smell into rivalry with the sense of sight and the sense of hearing as a means of affording us artistic pleasure. Why, they have asked, should there not be Fra Angelicos working among perfumes as the great Fra Angelico worked among colours? Why should there not be men of genius as great as Bach or Beethoven appealing to the imagination, not through the ear, but through the nose? One man, Septimus Piesse, as I discovered through a casual dip into the encyclopaedia, "endeavoured to show that a certain scale or gamut existed amongst odours as amongst sounds, taking the sharp smells to correspond with high notes and the heavy smells with low. He illustrated the idea by classifying some fifty odours in this manner, making each to correspond with a certain note, one-half in each clef, and extending above and below the lines." At this point I get out of my depth and have to begin swimming for life. You who are more expert in music, however, will see clearly enough what Septimus Piesse is getting at. "Treble clef note E (4th space) corresponds with Portugal (orange), note D (1st space below clef) with violet, note F (4th space above clef) with ambergris. . . . He asserted that properly to constitute a bouquet the odours to be taken should correspond in the gamut like the notes of a musical chord—one false note among the odours as among the music destroying the harmony." I have no doubt that a clever cook could work out a similar correspondence between musical sounds and the flavours that he mingles in his dishes, but I do not believe that any cook will ever give us a dish on the imaginative level of a Beethoven symphony, and I do not believe that any manufacturer of scents will ever produce a perfume on the imaginative level of an air by Mozart.

The sense of smell, I fancy, will always get its greatest delight from Nature, whereas the sense of sight and the sense of hearing, in their search for pleasure, will always be torn between the rival perfections of Nature and Art. The poet can write a poem which is as beautiful as the flowers of which he sings—even more beautiful, it often seems, for as we read it the poet's sense of beauty is added to our own—but I have never smelt a perfume from a bottle that seemed more than a shadow of the perfumes I have smelt in gardens and on country roads in early summer. I am not sure on the point, but I suspect that perfumes were first invented less from creative artistic joy than as a counterblast to unpleasant smells. The Roman poets seem to have had no doubt about the purpose of perfumery and made it clear that in their opinion the best smell for a human being was no smell at all, either good or bad. Even to-day many people are prejudiced against a man who uses scent, and most people dislike the neighbourhood of an over-scented woman, especially when the scent is the usual one. If perfumery had been an art comparable with music or painting we should have had constant battles among the intellectuals as to the rival merits of this perfume and that, and we should have had critics as original and able as Mr. Clive Bell and Mr. W. J. Turner writing about the genius of the great scent-makers and the lesser genius of the little ones. The plain fact is, however, that, compared even with cooking—may the gourmets forgive me for that "even"!—perfumery is a minor art.

Not that I wish to disparage the sense of smell and the pleasures we derive from it. Ever since childhood, some of our most ecstatic experiences have been due to it. The smell of the honeysuckle in the hedge, of sweet briar, of meadowsweet, of the roses and wallflowers in the garden, took us into a world as enchanting as that of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. There was not an aromatic plant that, as it gave forth its scent when crushed in the fingers, did not seem miraculously wonderful. The smells of fruits, too, how native to the Golden Age they then seemed—strawberries, raspberries and apples (though pears perhaps were better to taste than to smell). There are few plants and fruits that have an unpleasant smell, but when we come to the animals the proportion of unpleasant smells increases. The breath of sheep, hens visited by one who has been inhaling the clear air of the morning, the tom-cat, the fox, the skunk—the nose protests against all these as against the fumes given off by an orange while it is being peeled in a theatre.

I sometimes think, however, that we have grown too fastidious about smells. There could be no greater proof of decadence than the hatred of the modern woman for the smell of onions. Every man worthy of the name loves onions—raw, fried, boiled, taste, texture, smell and all. Yet such is the feminine prejudice against the smell of onions that if, a man were habitually to go to dances with the noble reek of onions on his breath, he would before long experience difficulty in finding a partner. It is said that the smell of onions can be removed by chewing raw parsley, and I recently saw a gallant onion-eater in a restaurant being intimidated by his wife into all but poisoning himself with parsley. Woman indeed gets too much of her way in these days. Time was when she would have been not only happy but proud to be in the company of a heavily-breathing man with a heavy moustache who had been eating raw onions, drinking whiskey and smoking shag, and whose handkerchief was steeped in eucalyptus as a protection against influenza.

One good thing may result, however, from the ultra-sensitiveness of the modern feminine nose. Women, even more than myself, may be roused to demand a strict censorship of the smells in the scented film. If they do not, they may find themselves within the next year or two overwhelmed by the smell of onions, eucalyptus, gas-works, new paint, decaying vegetables, Venetian canals, and things worse still in the picture-theatres. I trust they will see to it that, if the scented film comes into being, it will go in for sickly sentimentalism in its odours. Let it be roses, roses all the way—like life at its best—in other words, hardly like life at all. Y. Y.

ON THE SPANISH FRONT

[These extracts come from the diary of an Englishman who has been serving with the Spanish Government forces.]

AT the offices of the Cultural Commission they were reading the first leaflets dropped over Madrid by the German planes, threatening "ruthless bombardment."

Jose Bergamin, Catholic writer and member of the Commission, said to me: "To-day, if you come to think of it, is probably your last chance for a long time to come and see some of the finest pictures in the world." In those first weeks of the war, the picture galleries at least had bloomed. The Cultural Commission of the People's Front, composed of the leading artists, art critics and writers of Spain, had been busy unearthing from steel vaults in the Bank of Spain pictures which for years had lain hidden there serving as bonds, deposited or hoarded by grandee owners.

The list of the newly discovered pictures—now hung in the Prado—by itself reads like the catalogue of some splendid new gallery. The Prado was packed all day with people going to see the new-found treasures. "This afternoon," Bergamin

went on, "we shall have to start putting them back in the dark again. They may bomb to-night. Fortunately the Prado cellars are probably bomb proof."

In the small hours, sirens mounted on motor cars screamed through the darkened streets. Militiamen hammered on bedroom doors, warning everyone to get downstairs. In the lounge of the Hotel Florida people drifted uncertainly about, stumbling over chairs and divans in the darkness. Someone lit a cigarette, and a voice like a pistol shot from the street outside ordered us to be careful with the lights. There was an argument as to whether we should go to the cellar or stay in the lounge. "I have observed," said a French lady, "that Mr. So-and-So is staying in this hotel." She mentioned the agent of a notorious American financial magnate. Mr. So-and-So was known to maintain the closest relations with the German Embassy. "If he goes to the cellar I think we may assume that the raid is intended to be serious." We agreed to watch out for So-and-So as a barometer of peril. Presently we saw him picking his way towards the cellar. Someone asked him why he did not go to the German Embassy and be really safe. "The German Embassy," he said sadly, "left by plane to-day for Alicante." We went to the cellar.

The planes were now clearly heard. A bomb screamed through the air and the crash merged abruptly into the agonised screaming of women's voices somewhere far off.

* * *

Under the garden trees at the British Embassy, the militia guard played cards. Inside, impoverished gentlewomen, escaping enemy agents who wanted to get British passports, and an assortment of crooks, hung about, most of them insisting on seeing the Chargé d'Affaires immediately.

"And so," I said to the diplomat, "when my Spanish friends ask me why the British Government is going on in this way, I don't really know what explanation to give." That was not quite true. I thought I knew the explanation, but at the back of my mind perhaps still hoped he would give another one.

"Well," he said, "we shall have to maintain an attitude of reserve, of course. We shall hope to arrange things with the rebels in a more or less satisfactory manner."

"You are betting on that?"

"As for me," he said, beaming and pumping my hand vigorously, "I have an absolutely clear conscience, I am absolutely neutral. You can assure your Spanish friends of that."

* * *

Morning, afternoon and evening, the recruits gathered round the sergeant instructors asking when the rifles would come. "To-morrow perhaps." On the fourth day they gave us dummy rifles. A middle-aged lieutenant, who had fought in the old army in Africa and been cashiered the previous year as a suspected Socialist, explained to me why he thought the newspapers must be making a mistake about the attitude of the British Government on the "neutrality" question.

"Apart from anything else," he said, "it is quite clear to me that the British Government cannot have such an attitude, for I think that it will not be possible for the British to agree to the Germans controlling the mid-Atlantic from here, and Portugal, and the Moroccos. It is impossible."

"You forget," I said, "that you have not a monopoly of traitors in your country. Your General Franco is prepared to give away bits of Spain to foreign powers to help him beat the people of Spain. Our Government is full of similar people who are prepared to open any gate to the enemies of England rather than support a democratic Government in Spain or lead a joint action of the democratic Powers."

"And the patriots in your country, the democrats and so on. How strong do you estimate them to be?"

"Strong but split," I said.

"That's bad."

* * *

"One dead, four wounded." The Sergeant handed to the Captain his report on the accident we had just suffered on the winding road to the front. The lorry in which our platoon was packed and racing had gone fast round a hairpin bend and overturned.

"He was driving too fast," said the Sergeant.

"He was not," said the Captain. "You have to understand, and all the comrades have to understand, that nowadays we can't drive any slower on this road. Before they had all the new planes, yes. Now, you drive slowly along this road and the next thing you know their planes have spotted you. If we lose men in accidents, that isn't the driver's fault."

"What about our planes?" someone asked. "Can't they drive them away?"

"Well, Englishman," said the Captain, laughing and turning to me, "what about our planes? Are they going to send *us* a present from Portugal for a change?"

The dead man and the four wounded men lay on the roadside in a line together, waiting for a lorry back.

* * *

We moved into position on the Sierra. The men we had relieved told us it was a quiet spot. Then, somewhere over on the left, our people took some prisoners whose story indicated the quiet would not last long. The prisoners' story was circulated to the commandants "for information." The prisoners said that the big attack was scheduled for the thirteenth of September, but was being held up until the new German planes arrived from over the border.

It began, sure enough, on the sixteenth. The Junkers, with first-class German pilots and machine gunners aboard, and sometimes—so prisoners told us—a couple of Spaniards for "look see," flew low in squadrons, bombing and machine-gunning the line of our riflemen on the hill-tops.

Morning and evening we lay under the rocks, helpless, and trying to keep ready to jump out to meet a wave of infantry attack the moment the planes were gone.

Our water supply was under machine gun fire, rifle bullets kept coming into the rock shelter we used as a kitchen, so the eating and drinking was on a limited scale.

Sometimes we were on guard for as much as fifteen hours of the twenty-four. It was uncomfortable because you could neither sit nor stand. You could not sit because you could not see to fire, nor stand because if you stood up you got a bullet in the head. We perched uncomfortably among the rocks, looking across the Guadarrama plain.

* * *

One night three men were reported to have slept on duty.

The Captain called a meeting of the platoon, and explained the circumstances. He sat cross-legged in the middle of a circle of men, huddled in thin blankets against the terrible wind of the Sierras, pressed close under the parapets and rocks, with bullets whining intermittently above them.

"You all understand," he said, "the great gravity of the offence, from every point of view. You are here of your own free will, holding a point which is not simply of significance for us, although we may well die here, nor yet for Madrid and for Spain, but also for civilisation in all the world." He went on to speak more particularly of the perils brought upon others by a guard who sleeps on duty.

The question was then thrown open to discussion, the words of the speakers being occasionally inaudible as a big shell howled overhead and burst on the hillside behind.

It was proposed that those who had slept and the sergeant responsible for making the rounds of the guards should be shot. The sergeant, a former butcher's boy, who had joined three weeks before and been elected sergeant only ten days ago, spoke, haltingly but with terrible earnestness in favour of his own execution. When he had finished he squatted silent, nervously fingering his rifle.

The three guards who had slept—one of them was only sixteen years old and had been a delivery boy in a store in Valencia—spoke against execution, declaring they would never do it again, and suggesting some alternative penalty.

The difficulty was that whenever a "fatigue" was proposed it was found to be something which everyone was compelled

to do anyway owing to the grave danger we were in. One of those who had slept—whom I had already threatened to shoot on the previous night—proposed that "the Englishman" should be put in charge of all these hard cases. "We can rely on him to shoot them if necessary," he said. In the end they went unpunished, and that was the last occasion when there was any sleeping on guard in our platoon.

* * *

The battle developed, day in and day out, into a bloody game wherein the poorly armed forces of the democrats sought, by desperate assaults and reckless endeavours, to even out the difference between them and the German air force on the other side. One day we were told that now, indeed, it must be frankly said that the position was hopeless, but that nevertheless retreat could not be contemplated, for it might roll up the whole Sierra front.

"We can only die once," said the Captain. "And we have the satisfaction of knowing that we are dying for ourselves and for all free peoples of the world, too. Isn't that so, Englishman?"

There was discussion of the situation. One man said to me: "Do you believe that if we resist bravely here, fighting until we are every one of us killed, that the time we gain will be of use to the democratic Powers in preparing to come to the help of Spain?" I told them that every hour we gained there would be an hour more gained for these people in England who were fighting day and night with us against the "neutrality" pact and on behalf of the people of Spain.

"That," said one of the Assault Guards who was with us, "is very satisfactory."

THE LARGER LUNACY

"Germany's currency is stable and in no circumstances will be devalued."—Ministry of Finance.

"Germany has, of course, virtually no gold or gold exchange reserve."—*Manchester Guardian*, September 29th.

A STATE defaults on foreign debts,
It goes its happy, bankrupt way,
And astronomic credit gets
Because it does not mean to pay.

The solvent States, to ease the strain,
Devaluate before a fall,
Till none at last on gold remain
But States that have no gold at all.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

LABOUR AND PEACE

SIR,—Mr. Ernest Bevin, at the T.U.C. Conference last month said that the international situation was now such as to necessitate reconsideration of Labour's foreign policy as adopted at Hastings and Southport. He hinted broadly that this meant that Labour should henceforward support the Government's rearmament programme.

To many of us this is profoundly disturbing. Surely the Labour Movement cannot so far forget the lessons of 1914, nor the resolutions that it has carried at its recent conferences. *War and Peace* and *Socialism and Peace*, official manifestoes of the Labour Party, both declare in the clearest possible terms that Labour will never support a war of rival imperialisms and denounce in the strongest possible language the Government's betrayal of the League and the collective security system. I need not repeat the shameful stories of Manchuria and Abyssinia, but it is now surely essential also to recall, with the tragedy of the Spanish war hanging over this year's Conference, that the Government's attitude to this Fascist and military rebellion has been defined by Sir Samuel Hoare as a fight of "rival factions" which was "not our direct concern," and that it was partly British pressure on the French Government that led to the farce of non-intervention, which has meant in fact a blockade of the Spanish Government while unlimited help went to the rebels. Is Labour now going to fall into step behind this Government, which has betrayed all that democracy and Socialism stand for and abandon the policy of war-resistance which it declared that it would carry out against any Government which did precisely what this Government has done?

Difficult as the decision was, I am sure that Labour was right to vote against the Arms Estimates. How right we may see from reading the leading articles in the *Times*, *Observer* and other Conservative papers which hastened to congratulate Sir Walter Citrine and Mr. Ernest Bevin on showing that Labour is prepared patriotically to renounce its past and to fight whenever the Government alleges, as Governments always can, the needs of self-defence. By approving of the Government's war preparations, Labour will be unable effectively to oppose the growth of reaction at home. For domestic policies will more and more be justified in terms of the necessity to spend money and to organise the nation for war preparations. The Government's assurances about stopping war profiteering have proved as worthless as its promises of support for the collective system. The more the arms race speeds up and the greater the danger of war, the more authoritarian and reactionary the Government will become. The Trades Union Congress passed a resolution refusing to accept industrial and military conscription, even in war-time. But it is obvious that not only must there be both industrial and military conscription when war comes, but that at the present rate of war preparations these measures will soon have to be imposed in peace time if we are not to fall behind in the arms race. If the Labour Movement flinches at the prospect of having such measures imposed on it by a thoroughly reactionary Tory Government, it should think twice before assenting to the Government's arms programme.

By agreeing to the Government's arms programme Labour would run a double risk. On the one hand, it would risk committing itself to the Government's foreign policy and to the war that the Government's policy is making inevitable. On the other hand, it would risk supporting and promoting the growth of a species of boiled-shirt British Fascism, and the destruction of democracy from within. Once it embarked on that course, Labour would find itself continually compelled to accept a series of "lesser evils" on a descending scale, until it found itself reduced to the position of German Social Democracy in the days of Hindenburg, Papen, and Schleicher.

But the alternative also bristles with formidable difficulties. If Labour maintains the view that its total lack of confidence in the Government's foreign policy necessitates voting against the arms credits, it can no longer leave the Government and the nation in doubt as to whether, and if so on what conditions, it is prepared to support the Government in war. Refusing to vote for the arms credits on the ground of no confidence in the Government's policy implies refusal to fight for the Government until we are satisfied as to the nature of its policy. The kind of demands that Labour can legitimately make have been outlined in the New Fabian Research Bureau pamphlet, *Labour and War Resistance*. They aim at reconstituting in a practical and effective form the collective system which is now moribund. To remain ambiguous about these demands is to make the worst of both worlds. It would encourage the Government in their fatuous belief that whatever Labour may say or vote they can count on national unity in facing whatever risks may result from their foreign policy. At the same time it will encourage potential aggressors to count on this country being hopelessly divided and confused in any international crisis. Opposition Baldwinism is just as disastrous as the governmental variety.

The ultimate issue is—for what will the British people fight? The British people, like all other peoples, wants peace, but does not believe in non-resister pacifism. It believes in self-defence. The question is, what does it understand by self-defence?

Our National Government cannot be accused of aggressive intentions. They want peace as much as any of us. But at the same time they have played fast and loose with the Covenant, are apparently prepared to give a free hand to arms manufacturers and profiteers, to keep a ring fence of tariffs around the Empire and refuse to abate one jot of their sovereignty or to give up the right to use armaments in order to uphold their own view of British Imperial interests against any challenge. They honestly believe that all that is self-defence and that the way to have peace is to make national preparation for war.

Have the British people learned from the last war, and from sixteen years' propaganda about the collective system, that on those lines war sooner or later really is inevitable, and when it

comes will be a meaningless clash between rival national egotisms? Events like the Peace Ballot and the outcry that forced the resignation of Sir Samuel Hoare seem to show that something is stirring in the depths, that there is a change since 1914, that we are witnessing the dawn of a politically effective demand for peace, in the shape of a refusal to fight until we know what we are going to be asked to fight for.

Finally, may I suggest that it is improper to attempt to dispose of this issue of what we are prepared to kill and die for in an emergency resolution submitted at two days' notice? They should have as careful consideration and as full publicity as attended the hammering out of Labour's policy between Hastings and Southport. The final discussion and decision should take place at a special session of the Party Conference, summoned to deal with nothing but foreign policy and defence. Moreover, as it is the people of military age who will do the fighting and dying if there is a war, youth should be specially represented on the Executive when working out Labour's policy on these issues. If handled on these democratic and tolerant lines, with time for consideration and due regard for the special position of those who are of military age, the Labour Movement may restore unity and confidence in its own ranks and give the lead for peace for which the great majority of our people are longing.

LABOUR WORKER

SIR,—In your article on Labour and Rearmament you seem to overlook the important factors which influenced Labour members like myself in coming to a decision to support the policy of non-intervention in Spain. Especially do you ignore the fact that Labour is not the Government. Had Labour been in power your argument would carry more weight. As matters stood at the outbreak of the revolution, Labour had no first-hand opportunity of gauging for itself the immediate European developments that would follow any independent decision it might reach. France, diplomatically at least, held the key to the position. France was known to be favourable, as is British Labour, to the Spanish Government. France decided, however, that intervention might be fatal to its own national interests. Germany and Italy, to say nothing of the French Fascist movement, were its enemies, ready to join issue in the event of any move on its part to help the Spanish Government. France chose what it thought to be the lesser of two evils. Without the support of France, and without trust in the British Government seriously to implement either policy, would it have been to the advantage of the Spanish Government for Labour to advocate intervention, however justifiable, in the legal sense, it may have been? Unity of policy, in either case, was essential, while delay was dangerous, owing to the activities of Germany and Italy.

Further, there was the possibility that had the policy of intervention been pursued, Hitler and Mussolini would have gone "all out" in support of the rebels, while the British Government would not, to put it in your own words, have "markedly changed its sympathies."

Over all was the fear that such a situation, involving the whole of Europe, would develop into a general war.

Maybe events will prove non-intervention to have been a failure, so far as the saving of Spain is concerned; but that is not to say that intervention would have succeeded.

7 and 9 St. Bride Street, Ludgate Circus, E.C.4. T. E. NAYLOR

SIR,—Your leader of September 26th puts perfectly one side, but one only, of the Labour Party's present dilemma about rearmament. On the one hand, after this Government's record in the Sino-Japanese dispute, Disarmament Conference and Abyssinian crisis, how can we support it in competitive rearmament with bombers and battleships, taking its word that it will use them for collective security only? And yet, on the other hand, is collective security less necessary than it was? Has anyone suggested a convincing substitute? If Labour were successful in opposing rearmament in face of the menace of Nazi Germany, would not that make for war by tempting the Fascist States to strike? Does Labour want to find itself, when it is again called to power, facing the Fascist States in charge of a weakened country? And would not a policy of merely voting against rearmament in the midst of the new dangers deprive Labour of all chance of power in any near future?

That dilemma would be hopeless if Labour's only choice were between voting for Estimates for offensive rearmament by this Government and voting against them, without putting forward any positive alternative policy. But it is not. There is a way through the dilemma, and that is for Labour to put forward a new defence policy of its own—the policy of concentrating defence-expenditure on non-offensive measures that will reduce vulnerability to the minimum.

This policy of *defence without menace* is now a sheer necessity for this country, because air-power has reversed the effect of its geographical position, making it exceptionally vulnerable, and the ideal way to produce war would be to arm an exceptionally vulnerable country with mainly offensive armaments—especially if it were the centre of a coveted empire.

Besides, defence without menace is not only the least dangerous course that will be left to us if collective security is not to be had; it is also the essential condition for making collective security a reality. For we cannot interfere in Spain or anywhere else in Europe as long as our country is far more open than its neighbours to a knock-out blow from the air.

I suggest, therefore, that the Party Conference cannot be content with trying to get a decision whether to vote for or against the Estimates, but should appoint a strong committee to work out and examine the policy of defence without menace. Then, as soon as that committee reports, there should be a special conference called to decide whether a concrete policy of reducing vulnerability and menace to the minimum is to be the Party's alternative to competitive rearmament with weapons of terrific offensive power. JONATHAN GRIFFIN

18 Gordon Square, W.C.1.

SIR,—I was glad to read, a week or two ago, that you think the parties of the Left should reconsider their attitude to foreign policy. The recent correspondence in your columns has brought out the main issue clearly. Setting aside the pacifist solution, we have to choose between two courses. The first is an alliance (called by whatever name you like) of the Communist states and bourgeois democracies, led by Russia, France and Great Britain, against the "Fascist" or "brigand" nations—Germany, Italy and Japan—with their allies and satellites. Whatever may be said for this policy, it will not lead to peace. The inevitable outcome of dividing Europe or the world into armed *blocs* is now, as it always has been, war. For it is not possible, as Mr. Keynes wishes, to make the Communist-democratic alliance "collectively so formidable that only a madman will affront it." This for two reasons. First, as all history shows, military experts are capable of making gross miscalculations as to the prospects of success. Secondly, no alliance can be made so solid that there is no chink for a wedge—at any rate to eyes determined to find one. The expansionist Powers may always hope, by manoeuvring skilfully, to select an occasion for war which one or more of the combination against them will not regard as a *casus foederis*.

Nor is the attitude of those who advocate this policy reassuring. For us, who have acquired by conquest a larger empire than anybody else—and made large additions to it, also by conquest, in the last half-century—who are at this moment imposing on a conquered people by armed force a system of colonisation which they detest, to brand as "brigands" a nation which only sixteen years ago we and our allies stripped of all its colonies, slices of its metropolitan territory, its mercantile marine, and an indemnity of £6,600 million (or as much of it as we could get) implies either blatant hypocrisy or complete misunderstanding of the character of international politics. In any case it is an appeal to precisely those emotions of national hatred, arrogance and self-complacency from which war springs. If peace is what we want, we shall not get it that way.

The alternative line is for the British Government to take the lead in proposing a thorough-going revision of treaties—aimed at the immediate redress of outstanding grievances (so far as these are legitimate and reasonable) and paving the way for the establishment later on of a real collective system. There were many reasons for the failure of the League. Not the least of them was that it was superimposed on the injustices of Versailles. To attempt to underpin it or strengthen its sanctions without first securing, by negotiation and mutual concession, a new and fairer settlement of outstanding economic, territorial and racial problems is to court another failure. If the League, or any collective system, is to work, we must first create the conditions in which it *can* work. Very likely we shall have to make big concessions. But the mass of the people in this country want peace; and for the sake of peace they would, I believe, be ready to offer a

very generous settlement indeed—if only they were given a lead. The Socialist movement, claiming to speak for the masses and with its anti-imperialist tradition, should press for that lead.

I shall be told that no accommodation is possible with the Fascist Powers: that the offer of concessions, so far from evoking any response, will only encourage them to ask for more. That may be so. I do not know—nor does anybody until we have tried. We should lose nothing by trying. At worst, we should have put ourselves indisputably in the right. And anyhow, what do you propose to do when Hitler makes his next *coup*—in Danzig or Memel or wherever it may be? Do you want us to go to war to stop him? If not, is it not better to make the adjustments now, voluntarily, instead of waiting for another *fait accompli* and then surrendering to force once more?

If, on the other hand, you really are willing to send thousands—perhaps millions—of British workers to slaughter and be slaughtered in defence of what remains of the Versailles treaty, ought you not to do your best to secure them adequate training and equipment? I cannot think that the readiness of so many bourgeois Socialists to send the Army, Navy and Air Force to fight wherever and whenever the Covenant or the treaty is broken, while denying them increased numbers and up-to-date equipment in face of the mounting armaments of other countries, is calculated to inspire confidence in the electorate or fair to the soldiers, sailors and airmen on whose loyal co-operation a Socialist Government may some day wish to rely. Opposition to armaments had better be left to those of us who are against war.

But the arms race is only a symptom of a deeper disease. The urgent need at the moment is for a determined effort to *stop the drift to war* by means of a new settlement, reached this time through negotiation and give-and-take instead of dictation. That is a policy which can be supported alike by the out-and-out pacifist and the enthusiast for collective security, by supporters of re-armament as well as its opponents. If the peace movement and Labour would initiate a campaign for it throughout the country, they would, I am convinced, meet with a response which no Government could ignore. G. F. SHOVE

12 Grantchester Road, Cambridge.

"GRUNTERS AND SWEATERS"

SIR,—Like myself, Miss Warner is entitled to the amenities and immunities of a country which allows free criticism. It would be unkind to damp a rather naive, but none the less doctrinaire, enthusiasm for what I myself described as "a great moral experiment." But enthusiasm does not excuse irresponsibility in regard to facts. Was the Soviet system really "evolved by the grunters and sweaters themselves"?

Again, with regard to Miss Warner's figure for expenditure on health and education in the U.S.S.R., we should better be able to judge of its significance if she had given the comparative figure for this country.

As for the jeer at my efforts to get a little less din into working people's lives, I note that Miss Warner writes from a little village near the Dorset coast. Miss Warner also chooses this quiet and remote spot from which to write good verse and better prose. Why? HORDER

SUBURBIA AT LAND'S END

SIR,—Sennen Cove is so much admired among West Country resorts which blend sea, moor and cliff, that many writers and painters have made it their home or a seasonal retreat. They must all have noticed with artistic alarm that this white cove, with its background of sloping moorland, now richly hued in purple and gold, is rapidly suffering the encroachment of wooden bungalows, concrete garages, and the enclosure of old paths by or from the shore with barbed wire entanglements, and also the actual restriction of commoner rights for the drying of fishermen's nets.

It is whispered that even some of the new residents, recruited from literary and artistic circles, are themselves taking part in this rapid spread of suburban vandalism that is placing the fine Cornish coast beyond the preservation of rural England. The fisherfolk are unable, for various reasons, to stand up against the multiple landlordism which is the main source of the inconvenience and disfigurement, though in many respects they have the most to lose.

But a number of regular visitors have organised a local memorial which is in charge of Miss Hooper, 97 Gleneldon Road, S.W.16, who will be glad to receive signatures from sympathetic readers who would like to support the protest. Those writers and artists who have houses in Sennen will no doubt feel under a special obligation to localise their natural desire to save Land's End from further suburbanisation! J. B. HOLMAN

7 North Square,
N.W.11.

THE U.S.S.R. AND ABYSSINIA

SIR,—We were astounded to see, in your issue of Sept. 26th, that no mention was made of Litvinov's part in the Credentials Commission of the League, on the question of Abyssinia. You refer to the "small nations" as if the U.S.S.R. had either stood aside, or been against Abyssinia, whereas Litvinov was one of the most active supporters of Abyssinia's claims.

At a time when the reactionaries are doing everything to turn public opinion against the U.S.S.R. it is rather strange to find the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION belittling the work of the U.S.S.R. in the cause of peace.

Friends of the Soviet Union, JOSEPHINE SMITH
Friendship House, Little James St., W.C.1.

[Our correspondent is labouring under a delusion, and the suggestion in her last sentence shows, we fear, a suspicious nature. No level-headed person would accuse us of "belittling the work of the U.S.S.R. in the cause of peace" because we did not expressly mention Mr. Litvinov's action (which was recorded in all the newspapers) in upholding the Abyssinian delegates' claim to sit in the Assembly. We never expected the Russians to do otherwise than support that claim. But the line which a number of the smaller League Powers would take was much more doubtful, and it was their obstinacy, as we said, in refusing to be dictated to by France and Britain which was decisive.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

LORD HORDER AND PEACE

SIR,—Lord Horder only quoted half the "Dick Sheppard" pledge. Most of the world is "against" war as "against" cancer, but only a few have "renounced" war and undertaken "never to support or sanction another."

The Peace Pledge Union has begun to think in terms of peace, in the main others are still thinking in terms of war.

East Lodge, F. P. CROZIER,
Walton-on-Thames. Brig.-Gen.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

SIR,—In your issue of September 19th there is a review of a book dealing with our prison system. The reviewer states that, after an hour's visit to Dartmoor when Home Secretary, I announced that the English prison system had reached the "acme of perfection." When and where did I say anything so silly? I spent many hours at the prison.

It is stated that I authorised the flogging of a convict who was so badly wounded in the war that he had a silver plate in the head, and was goaded into semi-madness by a warder and attacked him.

The truth is that a Board of Prison Visitors (the proper tribunal) found this convict guilty of gross personal violence to an officer. The Board found that the offence was of a serious character and entirely unprovoked, and deserved exceptional punishment.

Before a Home Secretary confirms an order for corporal punishment there must be a medical report, and in this case the report showed that there were no grounds connected either with the prisoner's physical health or mental condition to justify interference with the decision of the Board of Visitors. The records contain no mention of a silver plate, but it is stated that the prisoner had a bald patch on his head, due to treatment for ringworm.

Your reviewer appears to have swallowed a large dose of the misrepresentation and abuse to be found in the book, and to believe even in the rubbish about refusing to permit a particular photograph or picture to be hung in a cell.

41 St. John's Road, J. R. CLYNES
London, S.W.15.

[The allegations in this book are specific and detailed and need careful investigation.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

MARRIED WOMEN WEAVERS

SIR,—I have read the paragraph "The Weavers' Claim" in your journal, and a similar one in the *Manchester Guardian*, with amazement and indignation. It is a shock to find papers which stand for democracy using such phrases as "An increase in rates for men might enable married women to be withdrawn from the

industry, and might so help to diminish the growing labour surplus." In actual fact this means, in an important branch of the textile trade, in which women have been employed for over 100 years, in a district where they have earned an honourable position in the community, and have maintained themselves, and often their dependants, by their work . . . that now, when the cotton trade has fallen on evil days and the workers, through no fault of their own, are suffering from poverty and its hard consequences, four-fifths of them, simply because they are women (and these amongst the most skilled workers), are to be regarded with contemptuous indifference, while the remaining fifth is to be helped to recovery. . . .

In other words (1) Only the men's poverty matters. (2) Married women must be withdrawn *with their will or against their will*. (3) This will diminish a growing labour surplus. . . .

Then women's individual lives signify nothing . . . nor does their hunger count? In a country not yet under a dictatorship why are they to be denied the right to work and live?

It is a terrible thing that well-meaning people should so lightly suggest adding another war to those of nation and class under which this unfortunate generation already suffers. . . . Is it too late to appeal for further consideration of the question before such a disastrous campaign is launched? ESTHER ROPER

14 Frognal Gardens, Hampstead.

[Our correspondent misapprehends our views and the point of what we wrote. We do not regard with indifference the condition of any workers, female or male. Nor did we advocate the withdrawal of married women from industry against their will. But facts, as well as principles, should be taken count of, and one of the facts is that, in our present industrial system, many married women are at work—against their will—in the textiles as well as in other occupations, because of the inadequacy of their husbands' earnings.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

"THE NEW AFRICA"

SIR,—Professor Macmillan, in an interesting review in your last issue with which I am in entire agreement, asserts that "civilisation is a blending of experience, and essentially *one*." It is plainly our duty to extend the benefits of this civilisation to those races, temporarily more backward, who are subject to our political control. But as one looks at the complexity of the modern world it seems not altogether easy to see where this one civilisation is to be found and how it can be known. Is it in Britain? In France? In America? In Britain as it is, or as Socialism, in which Professor Macmillan from his latest writings would seem to believe, would make it? What of the experience of those who have thrown over the values of nineteenth-century liberalism in favour of the Totalitarian State? Is it their authority that we are to follow? And is this one civilisation perfect? If not, on what grounds are its blemishes to be preferred to those of the other states of society which do not deserve the name? Would it be desirable to extend over a wider area of the globe the preoccupation, economic and political, with preparations for slaughter on a large scale that at present characterises the more advanced nations? So many vital problems depend for their solution on the answer that I felt some disappointment that Professor Macmillan had not given it. BARBARIAN

CARLYLE

SIR,—In his review of Mr. Pearsall Smith's excellent essays called *Reperusals and Re-Collections*, Mr. G. W. Stonier writes: "Persuasiveness is at least an important part of criticism, and Mr. Pearsall Smith almost persuades me to read Carlyle—although the title, *The Rembrandt of English Prose*, seemed to me at first to miss the mark completely. I am still not quite convinced." It is true that the essay is much occupied with the question of "style" or expression, for "style" is but the outward expression of the inner man who writes or speaks, and the inner man is the thing that matters. But still the essay is one of the best upon Carlyle that I have ever read, and the comparison of him to Rembrandt is apt. What astonishes me in the review is Mr. Stonier's statement that the essay "almost persuades him to read Carlyle." Can that imply that he has never read him? To me who remembers Carlyle and have read everything he wrote, his letters, his wife's letters, and his biographies, that seems almost incredible. To my great advantage I once knew *Sartor Resartus* almost by heart, and I still think Carlyle's *French Revolution* the masterpiece of dramatic history. I also know that by his *Past and Present* and *Latter Day Pamphlets* he led one of the most vital and far-reaching rebellions of history—the rebellion which shook last century's self-complacency in its accepted view of wealth and poverty. If Mr. Stonier could be persuaded to read Carlyle to the extent of these four books alone, I think he would gain a good deal in knowledge and imaginative pleasure. He might then be persuaded to continue with *Oliver Cromwell*, *John Sterling*, and parts of *Frederick the Great*, especially the part on Voltaire in Berlin. HENRY W. NEVINSON

4 Downside Crescent,
Hampstead, N.W.3.

Miscellany

TWO PLAYS WORTH SEEING

THERE are two plays, both something out of the way, to be seen, but possibly not for long. The one is the brothers Capek's *Insect Play* at the Little Theatre, acted by the People's National Theatre company. This had a run a short time ago of seventy nights. It has been put on again to try once more to see if imaginative satire does not appeal to the public. There must be many who would respond, if only they could believe that this is one of the few really remarkable plays of the twentieth century, and enjoy its performance even under the cramping conditions of an unusually small stage and cast. *The Insect Play* was first performed in 1923 under the direction of the late Sir Nigel Playfair, who was enthusiastic about it. Unfortunately it appeared before the violent anti-war reaction, ushered in by such realistic war novels as *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and the satire on war and communal excitement was then still too rasping to be popular. The scene in an ant-heap is the most withering, blasting, devastating satire on the Totalitarian State. Happily it was the very best part of the performance at the Little Theatre. Neither stage nor a numerous cast allowed it to make its full effect on mass-slavery and war-fever, but the spirit of it came through in the staccato shouting of the Dictator-Ant (Mr. Jack Allen) and his henchman (it is, by the by, a dictatorship of engineers that rules the heap). Much that scenery could have suggested was conveyed by the inhuman and sinister figure of the "Blind Timekeeper," speeding up, speeding up the beats to which the community labours, marches and dies.

The writings of Fabre are disconcerting reading. Not only are the morals of the insect world regrettable but they remind us how instinctive "rational" humanity is. The moment we see our fellows as walking, talking, loving, hating, instinctive mechanisms, something essential to our feeling any emotion but disgust towards them vanishes. What *The Insect Play* offers is this spectacle, and we are astonished and disturbed by the plausibility with which different types of human beings can be turned into instinctive mechanical creatures. The Tramp, who is the spectator of this human-insect world, represents, of course, poor, ragged Rational Humanity throughout. He was most admirably played by Mr. Willard, who also took the part in 1923. It is a first-rate performance, but one misses now the rough effective verse in which much of his earlier comments were known in that earlier translation. The Tramp plays the part of Chorus.

"These 'ere insects never dream of workin' for the general scheme," he said in disgust after watching the behaviour of the butterflies, the Ichneumon fly (predatory financier who kills to feed his horrid little larva of a daughter); Mrs. and Mr. Beetle, who live to roll up their "little pile" (Mr. Davenport turned himself into a clicking capitalist-beetle with amusing completeness); little Mr. and Mrs. Cricket, who live in a state of fondling, chattering, roseate domesticity, giggling a little over the misfortunes of others, till they are poignarded by the Ichneumon. (Mr. Wilford Fletcher capers and strikes admirably). He is the most fantastically sinister

creature among them all—unless it is his ugly gorging, lazy daughter, played to disgusting perfection by Miss Sheila Kay. Only the butterflies are a failure. Nothing is more ridiculous on the stage than a beautiful poet in the throes of imaginary composition. The producer made the mistake of blunting the edge of the satire on society love-making.

And then after these dreams the Tramp finds himself lying on an ant-heap. Now we see the "self-less" community life and the spectacle is not cheering. The satire of the heroic State-and-army civilisation goes home, but I did not think the dayfly Chrysalis, at the Little Theatre contributed her pathetic effect to the whole; the sweet voice that cries now and then from a corner of the stage, words of ecstatic hope and confidence—the voice of youth. When she is born, she cries, the world will change: she is; she flutters with her companions and dies. It would pay you almost to go late and miss the butterflies; for they are an ill introduction to the excellence of what follows. The other play is *Oscar Wilde*, at the Gate Theatre Studio. At its close Mr. Leslie Stokes (or was it Mr. Sewell Stokes) made an admirable little speech. He spoke also in the name of his brother, but also for the unacknowledged collaborators in the play, "Oscar Wilde himself, Lord Alfred Douglas, Frank Harris, Lord Carson and others." The dialogue which had amused us had been largely composed of a clever tessellation and rearrangement of Wilde's own epigrams, verbatim extracts from the two trials, Frank Harris's report of Wilde's conversation in Paris (the last scene of the last act), Lord Alfred Douglas's wit, all cemented together with some inventions in the same key to suit the shifted circumstances. Naturally, events do not follow each other on the stage as they did in life. For instance, Wilde, after his release is made to return to his house in Tite Street, which had been long ago sold up. I doubt also the authenticity of his having been refused admittance "for a retreat" to a Catholic monastery on coming out of prison. He went straight abroad to Berneval in Normandy and with Mr. More Aidy if I remember right. Mr. Aidy certainly told me that Wilde was in such tearing spirits after his release that he talked for thirteen hours on end without stopping, with a gaiety and zest he had never excelled. His mood may be inferred from one of his recorded remarks at Victoria Station. Looking round at the small group of friends assembled to see him off, he exclaimed, with amazement, "Is *this* the way England treats her famous criminals?" The only criticism I have to make of Mr. Robert Morley's admirable impersonation of him (which, as Mr. Stokes said, had been the making of the play) was the absence in it of that temperamental gaiety, the exuberant spirit of irresponsibility combined with astonishing pointfulness of comment, which made him so matchless a companion. The deliberately languid Oscar with the slow, measured, golden voice, apparently improvising finished apologues, his contemporaries found it quite easy to imitate; but the rejoicing vitality (Irish combativeness and Irish good-nature blended) which was the driving force behind his talk that was inimitable. So was the laugh with which he must, for instance, have stopped the shop assistant who was doing up a Noah's Ark for him, selected, of course, after the most careful consideration of its aesthetic merits, "Wait, I haven't yet tasted Noah's head!" Wilde was the most amiable of wits and wits are usually merciless. Very few wounding epigrams are recorded as his. One of the indubitably true things in Frank Harris's Life of him, a book as full of falsehoods as of truths, is that what made him so sought after was also that he was so immensely appreciative of the contributions of others. In the play I noticed that the famous remark about the hostess who had tried to start a salon and only succeeded in opening a restaurant, was attributed to Lord Alfred Douglas. He is also made to say in the play (certainly true) that one result of being much with Oscar was that all one's own good things were attributed to him. I guess that a good many of the most amusing things in *The Importance of Being Earnest* were Lord Alfred Douglas's. Oscar Wilde, though his own resources were so rich, was a jackdaw who carried off to his nest any bright object that attracted him, bright in wit or bright in beauty. Is not his famous description of himself as a "lord of language" the property of Tennyson? But to return to the play.

It opens with a scene in an hotel in Algiers. The authority on this period in his career is an article André Gide wrote long before *Si le grain ne meurt*. M. Gide found him changed; no longer amiable or light-hearted, but in that mood which Wilde spoke out of when he said that he cared no longer for happiness, only for pleasure because "it was more tragic." A rather insolent self-confidence, streaked with forboding that his triumph could not last, marked him then; that destiny had some shattering blow in store which would bring disaster but at the same time demonstrate his symbolic relation to his age. (We must remember M. Gide was writing after that blow had fallen. It is rather much to suppose that he defined his impression of Wilde so accurately at the time.) However, the dramatists were following a sure instinct in choosing this particular moment for the opening of their play. The next scene is first-night triumph of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. We see a specimen of the Green Carnation cohort of admirers, who by the by surely did not wear cloaks with sky-blue satin linings? We see Oscar Wilde in pursuit of pleasure. We see him treating with admirable sang-froid (historical) an attempt to "rent" him. Next we watch the criminal libel case, and hear the amusing duel between him and Carson (Oscar Wilde still glossy, still confident that an epigram can beat the world). At that dramatic point in a dialogue, in which the witness had hitherto scored over counsel again and again, when Wilde made the fatal slip of replying to the question, "Did you kiss him?" "Oh, no, he was extremely ugly!" Mr. Robert Morley should have made Wilde's recovery slower. It would have been more realistic and distressing if he had made a long pause before collecting himself to retort, "You sting me and insult me and at times one says things flippantly." There ought to be a long, agonising minute of silence there. Next we are given a brief glimpse of the criminal prosecution, and we hear Mr. Justice Wills's sentence. The last act is the weakest, which includes the scene after the release, and the final picture of Oscar Wilde in Paris, still talking brilliantly, but drinking and demoralised. Wilde's perfectly sincere defence, not of his sensuality, but of passionate attachments between men, "the love that dares not speak its name," rings as true in the theatre as it did once in the Court of Law. Mr. Bryning as Lord Alfred Douglas, and Mr. Harry Hutchinson as E. H. Carson, Q.C., sustained their parts excellently and so to mention again the leading part on which so much depended, did, with the above reservations, Mr. Robert Morley; while Mr. Carol, in the part of Charlie Parker, was the most completely satisfactory of all.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

COVENT GARDEN AS CONCERT HALL

I WAS recently invited—though not by Sir Thomas Beecham—to what was described as "the first concert which had taken place at Covent Garden for about forty years." It was a charity concert in aid of the Islington and Finsbury Slum Clearance Scheme, and it raised about a thousand pounds for that purpose, as was announced at the concert by Captain Victor Cazalet, M.P., who is a director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Syndicate, whose managing artistic director is Sir Thomas Beecham.

This concert was the first of a number of musical events which are going to take place this autumn and winter at Covent Garden. Very many years ago Covent Garden was in use as a concert hall and promenade concerts were held there before they began at the Queen's Hall. Now it is the intention of Sir Thomas Beecham and his co-directors to return to this usage and the Beecham Sunday afternoon orchestral concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra will in future be

given at Covent Garden, beginning next Sunday afternoon, October 4th.

There will also be a visit of the Dresden State Opera and orchestra to Covent Garden from November 2nd to November 13th, and the British Music Drama Opera Co. will present a season of opera in English there from November 18th to December 8th. Then it is intended to give an opera season from December 26th to January 27th, under the auspices of the Imperial League of Opera, while the usual international opera season will begin on April 19th next.

At this charity concert which I attended the great attraction was the tenor, Richard Tauber, singing with Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, whose leader is now Mr. David MacCullum in place of Mr. Paul Beard, who is to lead the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra. I had never heard Richard Tauber sing and I confess I was greatly prejudiced against him for having descended to sing in musical plays and films, and I expected to find in his singing all the signs of serious deterioration as an artist. I do not know whether Tauber sang particularly well on this occasion, but certainly in his operatic arias he revealed himself to me as an astonishing singer and a complete surprise. I would say categorically that every aspiring singer should go to hear Tauber, for in some respects he is the finest tenor I have heard since Caruso, and I only wish that some of our more pretentious singers would acquire some of his good qualities.

His programme consisted of Tamino's aria "Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön" from *Zauberflöte*, Otavio's aria "Trostet die Heissgeliebte" from *Don Juan*, Lenski's aria "Wohin, wohin" from *Eugene Onegin*, the aria "Es muss gelingen" from Smetana's *Die Verkaufte Braut*, and "Es war einmal" from Offenbach's *Hoffmann's Erzählungen*, some operetta arias by Johann Strauss and Lehar and a number of songs. Judging Tauber's singing at this concert by the highest standards, I would not describe him exactly as a great singer and this, to my mind, was manifested on this occasion by a lack of that utter direct purity and simplicity in his interpretation of Mozart's arias which this music of Mozart's demands before we can feel completely satisfied. Artistically I would say that Luise Helletsgruber's singing as Cherubino at Glyndebourne and Lotte Lehmann's singing as Leonora in *Fidelio* as I have heard it in Vienna is superior to the singing of Tauber at this concert, but I do not know what living tenor would pass the test of Mozart. The Hungarian, K. von Pataky, whom I heard in Salzburg and in Glyndebourne this year, has many merits, but there is something constrained about his singing, as if a stream of water 10 inches in diameter was being pressed through a quarter-inch nozzle.

Now the first great virtue of Tauber's singing is its marvellously easy and apparently natural production. He sings as if effortlessly, and this is a remarkable natural phenomenon giving one as much pleasure as any other exceptional natural capacity. Secondly, Tauber has the most perfect diction, the greatest syllabic and consonantal clarity and distinctness of enunciation I have ever heard in a singer. I felt on this occasion that if I could only listen to Richard Tauber singing in German for one week, then I should never again make a mistake in pronunciation when speaking that language. Now this is a quite extraordinary virtue in a singer, but it is in my opinion an essential and fundamental one, though it is not possessed by one singer in a hundred. Then Tauber sings in tune or, on this occasion, sang in tune from beginning to end. This is phenomenal—in the vulgar sense of the word—in a tenor. Also his breath-control is quite extraordinary and technically his singing has a degree of polish and finish that is exceedingly rare. In fact he must be considered as a virtuoso, which is what a singer hardly ever is, and generally his singing resembles more the playing of a first-rate instrumentalist, a first-class oboe player for example, than that of any other singer I can call to mind. Finally—to conclude this brief summary of his virtues—he sings not only with precision, but with an extraordinary verve which reminds one of Caruso. When one considers that a tenor who does not bleat pathetically and at the same time sings in time and in tune is so rare as to be almost non-existent, how can one refrain from enthusing about the singing of Richard Tauber?

Yet it must be confessed that he has some defects which make it very difficult for some connoisseurs to enjoy his singing. In the first place he has a rather film-star style which does not irritate me, but it irritated some musicians who were with me and I understand their point of view which is, indeed, correct. Then he has a trick of singing the first few stanzas of a German song in the original language and then changing suddenly for the last verse into English which, whatever his idea in doing so, makes a very bad impression, as if he were only doing this to produce a cheap effect. Finally, he did what perhaps all popular singers do—but which Elena Gerhardt, Lotte Lehmann and other good artists never do—namely, descend at the conclusion of their programmes to singing rubbish. And, in my opinion, not only comparative rubbish, but utter rubbish. What really astonished me was that in spite of the rubbish that he sometimes sings he can still sing the better music so extraordinarily well, and this points to the fact that Tauber must have an artistic conscience and a discipline of his own. One must not criticise an artist for not transcending his own limitations; one must only record the fact that he has certain limitations. After that his merits depend on his remaining true to his own virtues, and here Tauber must be unreservedly praised. He is a great vocal virtuoso and obviously he is proud of and takes a delight in his virtuosity; therefore he communicates this pride and this delight to the audience that listens to him and that is all but the very highest praise possible. W. J. TURNER

"MINE EYES DAZZLE"

THE notion that a man's art is the product of his environment is a half-truth most eloquently proposed in the writings of the admirable Taine, and often repeated in these days by the more indiscriminating disciples of Marx. A half-truth I call it, because an artist's environment is responsible only for the least important and least interesting features of his work, that is to say his subject-matter and his material. The environment, in fact, provides what the great artist has in common with his mediocre contemporaries: but what makes him great, his *differentia*, comes from his own personal gifts. Those who so long-windedly expound the obvious fact that Giotto painted religious frescoes and altar-pieces because such objects were in demand, throw no light whatever on the really significant problem, which is why St. Francis painted by Giotto moves us profoundly, while St. Francis painted by Giotto's contemporaries and pupils arouses only a languid curiosity.

The superficiality of this doctrine of environment becomes still more glaring when one considers the great French painters of the nineteenth century. Mr. Clive Bell points out very truly that most of them were despised alike by the general public and the guardians of official taste. They depended for a livelihood either on their own money or on the support of a few specially perceptive patrons. Their art, therefore, is in a sense the product of bourgeois capitalism. In a totalitarian state they might have been able to paint only on Sundays, when reposing from their more valued activity in a factory or government office. But, as Mr. Bell would be the first to agree, the important part about Cézanne is not that his pictures were almost unsaleable, but that they resemble the pictures of Piero della Francesco and Poussin in their inexhaustible power to give valuable pleasure.

The Anglo-French Art and Travel Society has organised an exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries of nineteenth-century French painting, which is of overpowering grandeur. Seventeen artists are represented, most of them admirably. In his preface in the catalogue Mr. Bell gives a list of painters whose absence he regrets, including Chassériau, Boudin and Bazille. (He might have added the Douanier Rousseau.)

With equal justice he might have deplored the presence of Gauguin. The fecundity of his influence is admitted, but in this exhibition he is painfully out of place, like a profiteer in the Athenaeum. His pictures look like posters advertising steamship cruises, and it will be a good thing when he is finally relegated to his proper place, in the company of Moreau and Carrière, painters whose importance is principally historical. On the other hand, we are grateful for the absence of the Barbizon painters, a school of respectable artisans, interesting only because in their lifetime they were preferred to their great contemporaries. A lot of wall-space in the Louvre is given to a bequest by a rich shopkeeper called Chauchard, who bought Barbizon pictures, the worst hack-work of Corot, and the most expensive products of the grotesque Meissonier. Official taste is almost always as bad as M. Chauchard's—one has only to look at the pictures purchased by the Chantrey Bequest. One lesson taught by this exhibition is that the State, in so far as art is concerned, is an ass.

But it is not for lessons, it is for enjoyment, that one looks at these pictures. And what a Golconda of enjoyment is here made attainable. Mr. Bell's comparison of the French nineteenth century with the Italian Renaissance justifies itself. The Ingres *Bain Turc* (lent by the Louvre) is as lovely as anything Raphael ever painted, and there are two stunning portraits from private collections. I can mention here only a few of the most exalted peaks in the range displayed to our eyes—the Delacroix *Tasso in Prison* (which inspired Baudelaire to a sonnet), the Corot *Forum, Honfleur*, and *Haydée*, the Courbet *Forest Stream*, the Degas *Mme. Jeantaud*. Degas, indeed, is a painter whose stature looms evermore impressively as time takes us further from him. He now seems to me as great as Renoir, and second only to Cézanne. But these comparisons are ridiculous: the Seurats are as beautiful as paintings can be. The *Gilet Rouge*, again, is one of Cézanne's supreme masterpieces, superlative in construction and colour, and profoundly poetic. Manet, Monet (notice the ill-hung *Turkeys*), Pisarro (his picture of *Dulwich College* oddly resembles some of the best work now being done in England), Sisley (here it is not the light but the painter's blood which gives his work an English air)—even fragile Berthe Morisot shines here with an enchanting landscape in which she follows Corot rather than Manet, whose influence on her, I think, was disastrous. Van Gogh, on the other hand, irrupts—not because his pictures are not good, but because they are not French. They conspicuously lack the *retenue* which distinguishes French art, they are too expressive for this company, too little implicit. (A picture by Tintoretto, by Greco, by Rembrandt, or by Picasso, would be equally out of its element). This discretion, which you notice even in Delacroix and Courbet, is not the inheritance of all French artists. It is absent, for instance, from Balzac and Victor Hugo, but I cannot think of any great French painter who has lacked it.

These nineteenth-century Frenchmen, I agree with Mr. Bell, are the equals of the great Italians. But there is one most important difference between, for instance, the painting of Degas and the painting of Botticelli. The Florentine spent his life among things that were intrinsically beautiful—the houses of the period, the furniture, the clothes, even the humblest articles can be said to have "belonged." The Frenchman, on the other hand, lived in an age of bad taste—almost everything that was being made, whether it was a church or a chair, was ugly. The minor artists of the nineteenth century fled from their own times, finding refuge, like the Barbizon group, in the unspoiled forest, or like the later pre-Raphaelites, in the picturesqueness of the past. But Degas (and Manet and Lautrec) made beauty out of things that were themselves ugly, detecting in drawing-rooms and theatres and cafés curious relationships of form, and perpetuating momentary effects of light by a sensuous translation into pigment. The resulting pictures were realistic (for the Impressionists represented the appearance of things more exactly than any previous painter except, perhaps, Velasquez), but were entirely different from all contemporary artifacts. Indeed, if the archaeologists of the future excavate Impressionist paintings and in the same dated layer contemporary buildings and furniture, they are likely to decide that the paintings were by artists imported from a superior civilisation. Unluckily we are hindered by our knowledge from accepting this convenient hypothesis, and we are left face to face with the fact that individuals of genius can transcend inexplicably their environment. These nineteenth century Frenchmen were not greater artists than the Renaissance Italians—that would be impossible—but they were greater prodigies, because everything was against them, not merely the Government and the Academy, but, what was incomparably more serious, the plates from which they ate, the carpets on which they walked, and the sofas on which they made love.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Follow Your Saint," at the Queen's Theatre

If Miss Edna Best were able to give the impression that she is the kind of wife who would be absorbed by a passion for a sort of professional co-respondent, the premise of this play would be better. But, exquisitely though she plays her part, the sensitiveness that made her "Constant Nymph" so moving militates against the plausibility of the character. It is perfectly all right to present her as the comfortable cushion on which Mr. Hannen lays his head and her relationship with the tremulous gossoon from his Celtic sanctuary is equally credible. But that this maternal tenderness could have ever flamed into the jealousy that had Mr. Francis Lister's admirably studied cad watched by a detective is psychologically indefensible. If Miss Best was of the type that plays a silver-plated triangle, she would never have tolerated for an instant poor David's callow romanticism. It says a good deal for Mr. Geoffrey Keen that, despite a production which left him in his most difficult scenes isolated from the other characters, he managed to convey sufficient of the twilight which shrouded his personality in almost insuperable fog, to give the earlier scenes at any rate some reality. The climax of the play proved less credible still; but the spectacle of Mr. Hannen when he discovered that his protégé had shot his hitherto unsuspected wife's paramour at a local game-shoot proved electrifying. We are not used to Mr. Hannen in this sort of emotional outburst and he barked his way all over the stage till he had twisted himself and the plot into the most terrifying display of what the public schools have taught us is the right way for a fellow to behave. If the play had ended with his outburst and his summoning of the police to arrest David, it would at least have had dramatic unity, but a succession of volte-faces by everyone in turn, not the least of which was the Inspector's acceptance of the reason for his summons being that Miss Best's jewellery had been stolen, brought the structure down in ruins. One of the main difficulties of the effect of the play is that while the husband and wife are supposed to be the stars, the real centre of the play is David and the balance of emotion tips up too arbitrarily. The situations are handled in too old-fashioned a manner and except for those interested in seeing good acting it can hardly be recommended as an evening's entertainment.

"Oedipus Rex," at Covent Garden

Sir Gilbert Murray once brilliantly translated "ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν" as "lost his umbrella" and, metaphorically speaking, everyone in this cast with the exception of Mr. Franklin Dyall as the messenger had lost his umbrella in a greater or lesser degree. Some of our fellow-critics have been urging those younger actors who are out of a job to buy a seat and go and see this production; we implore them not to. If every word is heard at the back of the gallery, most syllables are inaudible and the A's that are doubled and the O's that are enriched with an R at the end are legion. It is uncharitable to criticise an actor at the end of his career, but Sir John Martin Harvey has entirely lost *his* umbrella, ribs, shaft and cover. If you are fond of the barnstorming tradition, then here it is for you in all its richness, but I feel Mr. Crummles would have gone a good deal further with more effect, and he would never have allowed an infant phenomenon of so intense a colour as Teiresias' slave to point the moral of a healthy life in so outstanding a manner to his elders and betters in a land where hygienics are always supposed to have been well understood

The Reinhardt setting remains as distinguished as it always was —the grouping is still as beautiful as ever, but the rushing crowd through the auditorium has lost its power to thrill. Revue has killed it in the same way that familiarity with the Big Bad Wolf robs us of serious emotion at Oedipus' red-painted eyes. The music of the chorus is dreary and the Ionian mode as applied to God Save The King at the close of the performance derisive. The whole production has an interest as a historical incident in the development of the modern theatre, but for anyone who has been to St. Luke in Phocis and passed the scene of Laïus' death with all its still vivid romantic atmosphere, the air of having combined the Brandenburger Tor and the *Wellenbad* is singularly depressing.

"The Last of the Mohicans," at the London Pavilion

When first we knew them, the Hurons were a ferocious crew, not as bad as the Pawnees, as grand as the Sioux or as bloodthirsty as the Cherokees, but tough for all that. Rousseau's noble savage came later, and even in the romantic phase, never convinced. It has been left to moving pictures to show the pesky Hurons in their true war paint—terrible naked men, with topknot plumes of hair sprouting from shiny pates—yowling like cats and dancing like fiends in human shape. That Mr. Bruce Cabot, whom you saw leading gangsters in *False Faces* and a lynching mob in *Fury*, whose own great-granddad was a Red Indian, cavorts and screams at the head of the hired tribes, as to the manner born. If you did but know it, only Mohicans are noble, and they, in this story, have reached the very last syllable of extirpation. Except for this remnant the Indians are hideously terrifying, the Englishmen are stupid and obstinate, but undoubtedly of the Bulldog Breed, the American colonists are already as laconic and independent as Cal Coolidge. Randolph Scott (who was in *Roberta* and *Follow the Fleet*) has a merry twinkle under the fringe of his racoon-skin hunter's cap. Montcalm the French general (for our historical background is the Seven Years' War) is suave as suave. The difficulties of bringing so many tongues and tribes to the eyes and ears of the world, are solved by giving each race some different way of speaking English, often with ludicrous effects. Montcalm speaks the best English, his lieutenant is an American, the Indians talk telegramese. But *The Last of the Mohicans* has a lot of the genuine old blood and thunder to make, and a canoe chase down rapids, with redskins biting the water and the birch-bark flying, beats all the screaming brakes and hurtling roadsters of gangsterdom.

"Maria Bashkirtseff," at Studio One

More than one of our fellow film-critics have noted in Frl. Lili Darvas, who plays the title-role in this film, a marked facial resemblance to George Arliss. We resent that. A certain unexpected similarity between the upper lip of the foreign lady in question and that of a gentleman of the old school—England's own inalienable actor and impersonator—is no excuse for the comparison. Admittedly some significance attaches to the lips here, for the tragic true history recounted in this film calls for a tremulous upper lip, as opposed to the immutable aristocratic stiffness which the Arliss lip has worn on the screen through the trying predicaments of several centuries. But are we to overlook the fact that the Marie Bashkirtseff of this film looks extraordinarily like Cicely Courtneidge? Honour where honour is due. The stuffy, overcrowded picturesqueness of the Parisian scene in the eighteen-seventies is happily reproduced in this picture, thanks in part to the mid-Victorian notions of lighting to which Austrian studios still cling, but unfortunately, where interpretation of character is concerned, in the telling of its true story *Maria Bashkirtseff* largely lacks conviction. It would have been altogether more successful (though, of course, less interesting) if it had presented the story of a consumptive girl of great talent in love with a young writer of genius without naming these characters Maria Bashkirtseff and Guy de Maupassant.

"Piccadilly Jim," at the Empire

Piccadilly Jim is a film of the same type as *My Man Godfrey*, but it is not in the same class. To some extent the freshness, improbability, and charm of the original P. G. Wodehouse story are preserved in this film version of his novel; yet it is clear that P. G. Wodehouse plots and humour make indifferent film material. It is difficult to see exactly why this should be so, but here, as in *Anything Goes*, translation into terms of the cinema has had the effect of blurring characterisation, complicating general outlines, and devaluating amusing details. A strong cast, led by Robert Montgomery, Eric Blore and Frank Morgan, all of them excellent, does its best to hold the rickety fabric together; they get their laughs—but the film is too long by some fifteen minutes, the adaptation is faulty (Billie Burke, for instance, and Robert Benchley were wasted) and, despite an impression of speed in the first half of the film, the continuity gets into serious difficulties. The result is a pretty piece of mechanism that runs down, like a cuckoo clock.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, October 3rd—
- Haigh Marshall Orchestra, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.

SUNDAY, October 4th—
- Professor F. Aveling on "The Human Will in Post-Renaissance Thought," Conway Hall, 11.
- Richard Tauber, Covent Garden, 3.15.
- Stratton String Quartet, Working Men's College, Crowndale Road, 6.30.
- M. Dobb on "Britain Without Capitalists," Marx House, Clerkenwell Green, 7.30.

MONDAY, October 5th—
- Spanish Medical Aid Meeting. Speeches by Professor J. B. S. Haldane, Miss Isabel Browne, Rex Baker, Francis Meynell and others, Conway Hall, 8.30.
- "You're Telling Me." Everyman Cinema, Hampstead.
- "The Provok'd Wife," Embassy Theatre.

TUESDAY, October 6th—
- John Langdon-Davies on "An Eye-Witness in Spain," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
- Brig.-Gen. E. L. Spears on "France," Morley College, Westminster Bridge Road, 8.
- Professor Sir S. Radhakrishnan on "The Future of Religion; The Contribution of the East," Besant Hall, Rodmarton Mews, off King Street, Baker Street, 8.
- "The Country Wife," Old Vic.

WEDNESDAY, October 7th—
- Howard League for Penal Reform Luncheon. Sir Alexander Maxwell on "The Criminal Statistics," Comedy Restaurant, 12.45 (Tickets 2s. 6d.).
- Dr. Franz Borkenau on "Spain in Civil War," Le Play House, 35 Gordon Square, 8.15.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

FOR each of us there are some subjects only to be studied in a desultory and frivolous way. One learns happily, or even eagerly, from scrapbooks and miscellanies when one would fly in alarm from a comprehensive treatise. In just the same way children are ready to learn geography from a jigsaw map of Europe and enjoy popping Styria into one place, and Esthonia into another, so long as they are regarded as counters in a game and not countries to be taken seriously—thus shocking uncles and aunts, who feel that information should not be acquired solely for amusement. In the same way serious students of naval history will feel disgusted with me because I should never dream of reading an exhaustive study of British sea-power and yet have enjoyed reading *The Anatomy of Neptune*, by Brian Tunstall (Routledge, 12*s.* 6*d.*) and *This Flower of England's Garland*, by G. E. Manwaring (Allan, 10*s.* 6*d.*), because I felt they were books made to dip into and lay aside at any moment. Mr. Tunstall's book is intended as an anthology of naval history, or as I should say a scrapbook, with a letter from Sir Francis Drake on one page and the death of Nelson on another, while Mr. Manwaring provides a collection of essays on subjects such as *Foreign Impressions of the Fleet*, *Woodes Rogers*, *The First Naval Uniform for Officers*, and *Popham's Expedition to Ostend*. To me, however, the most interesting item has nothing whatsoever to do with the navy or the sea, and seems to have crept in, in hopes of not being detected, last of all. The subject is *Journalism in the Days of the Commonwealth*, and it deals with the career of a Fleet Street journalist and tailor, John Dillingham, who successfully brought out *Le Mercure Anglois*, a weekly newspaper in the French language dealing with English politics, which managed to exist for four years, thanks to the fact that his inveterate enemy, John Mabbott, the licenser of newspapers, knew no French. Both of Dillingham's other publications, *The Parliament Scout* and *The Moderate Intelligencer*, were suppressed by Mabbott.

* * *

The Moderate Intelligencer! This brilliant Fleet Street product had nothing to do with the Navy, but the same cannot be said of *Parliament Joan, the Florence Nightingale of the Seventeenth Century*, who after an apprenticeship as a spy in the pay of Parliament during the Civil War, applied to be employed as a nurse to the seamen wounded in the Dutch war, whose neglect had horrified her. She spent her own money and contracted a mortal disease while succouring them, was grudgingly granted ten pounds by Parliament while she was alive, and churlishly refused her last request—burial in Westminster Abbey—when she had died. It is a pity Mr. Manwaring did not write his essay twenty-five years ago, so that Parliament Joan could have been resurrected in a women's suffrage procession. The details of her life do not matter; it is enough to know that she existed, and since she failed to get buried in the Abbey, she deserves a plaque. Where? Who cares? So long as one can stare at a blue circle with the words: *Parliament Joan.*

* * *

Mr. Tunstall tells us that the Parliamentary generals Blake and Monk, who took command at sea, invented the line ahead formation of engaging the enemy; but personally I found the whole early part of the book on the dull side. The extracts about the Armada are not exciting, and I had read Raleigh's account of the Little Revenge before. The fun begins when the solid Hanoverians climb on board—not that it was always an easy operation. Rear-Admiral Sir Byam Martin was faced with a most difficult problem in the shape of the Queen of Würtemberg. As the Princess Royal:

> She had an evident tendency to be corpulent, but no one would ever imagine she could have spread out to such a rotundity of space as she occupied during many years, and which seemed to increase to the day of her death. When the Queen of Würtemberg last visited England, William IV sent for me to desire I would have a large chair to hoist her in and out of the yacht, when the following dialogue took place. I said that there was a chair ready that would perfectly answer. "No such thing," said the King. "You have no notion of her size." "Sir, the chair is of dimensions to receive any two women in the kingdom." "I tell you it won't do; she is larger than any three women, aye, than four women in the kingdom." I believe the chair I had made in consequence of this command is now in the lower room at St. James's Palace, kept no doubt as a model for royal ladies.

Sir Byam Martin had a great deal to do with royalty, and his experiences with them are vividly alive. It is impossible to visualise being on board Drake's ship and having a conversation with him; Sir Byam Martin makes one feel one has shared his experiences when George III and the Royal Family came aboard at Weymouth:

> The King, as he advanced towards anyone, had a peculiar sort of stare, and half-smile, which tended to discompose those, who like myself, would rather have been a hundred miles off than be found within his orbit . . . I remember an unfortunate young midshipman being pent up, as it were, in the corner of the after-part of the quarter-deck one day, just when some of the sea birds called gulls were hovering about. The King burst out in a moment: "Young gentleman, what birds are those—pigeons?" "No your Majesty, gulls." "Gulls, gulls," continued the King, "where do they come from? What do they feed upon? Where do they roost?" All this was uttered with the greatest rapidity . . . indeed the poor mid. was so confounded that he was ready to sink into the deck.

* * *

Sir Byam had the doubtful happiness of serving, almost from infancy, in the same ship as William IV, a privilege which entailed wearing the special uniform devised by his royal captain: white breeches so tight as to appear sewn on the limbs, yellow-topped hunting boots, an immense artificial pigtail under a square cocked hat, and an enormous sword. It would be interesting to discover the psychological reasons why royal persons have so often an obsession about the minute details of other people's clothes, and take so tyrannical a pleasure in straining the loyalty of buttons, boots and belts to bursting point. I do not remember that any of the Stuarts made a fuss about clothes. Naval uniform, as Mr. Manwaring tells us, was not made compulsory until the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1741 an officer went into action wearing a jockey cap. Both Mr. Manwaring and Mr. Tunstall make it clear that all through the history of the Navy there has been a fight between fussy, brutal and usually inefficient martinets, and the exceptional officers who by looking after the happiness and comfort of their crews were able to do anything with them. Captain Griffiths, writing while William IV was Admiral of the Fleet, seems to belong to a completely different era.

> The propensity of the mind is to be free. Commonsense points out to us the propriety of submitting to certain restraints as indispensable. But whatever the object of this restraint, it becomes irksome the moment those under it do not feel its necessity.

And he proceeds to discuss in detail how life on board may be made comfortable for everyone. But for the most part Earl St. Vincent seems to have been justified in writing to the First Lord:

> My dear Lord,—The promotion to the Flag has happily removed a number of officers from command of ships of the line who at no period of their lives were capable of commanding them; and I am sorry to have occasion to observe that the present state of the upper part of the list of captains is not much better than it stood before.

That is splendid.

DAVID GARNETT

Next Week

AUTUMN BOOKS NUMBER

ST. GEORGE AND THE SOLDIERY

War Memoirs. By D. LLOYD GEORGE. Vol. V. *Ivor Nicholson and Watson.* 21s.

From the historian's point of view, the penultimate volume of Mr. Lloyd George's work is at least equal in fascination and importance to its predecessors. There is a remarkable account of the discussions with Austria over a negotiated peace which followed on the Lansdowne letter; there is a summary of Mr. Lloyd George's own reaction to the Bolshevik Revolution; there is a brilliant character-sketch of Clemenceau, who became Prime Minister in the period here covered; there is a passionate and vigorous defence of his attitude to the man-power problem which culminated in the Maurice debate; the early stages of the March, 1918, offensive are described; and there is a final chapter on the first phases of American intervention. Of the quite vital importance of this volume there can be no sort of doubt. There is enough controversial matter here to keep the pundits busy for years.

But it is not a volume on which the judgment of a first impression can possibly be adequate. Most of its validity depends upon the proportionate importance of documents to which the public has only a partial admission. What Mr. Lloyd George reveals is devastatingly on his side. From it all, we are, broadly, to infer that throughout the period everyone else was always wrong, and that he was always right. The soldiers never played the game by him. Haig was wooden, stupid and not quite straightforward; Henry Wilson was brilliant and dishonourable; Sir Herbert Lawrence and Lord Horne were poor stuff; Sir Frederick Maurice was weak and incompetent. Had Sir William Robertson succeeded in his aims, there would have been an end to civilian supremacy in this country; Mr. Lloyd George, we are to assume, saved the principles of constitutional government. He has a pretty poor opinion of Pétain; Foch comes nearest to being unscathed. The picture we are to infer is of light struggling against darkness, of one whose eagle vision was constantly thwarted by the poor material through which he had to work. Of British soldiers, Mr. Lloyd George has the poorest possible opinion; and he certainly takes no pains here to conceal the profound contempt he feels. They mislead him. They cannot draw proper inferences from the facts in their possession. They are routineers, incapable of adjustment to changing conditions. They are never wholly loyal; and they have no imagination. A great mass of evidence is adduced to support these drastic conclusions.

Let it be said frankly that a good deal of it is really important evidence which, so far, at least, none of the soldiers or their defenders has adequately answered. On the documents here presented, Mr. Lloyd George makes out a strong case against most of those whom he indicts. I still cannot myself understand how, granted his views of Haig, he kept him in supreme command; and I should much like to know why, if our army system breeds incompetents of this low calibre, Mr. Lloyd George is not using his incomparable powers to change a system which may well lead us to devastation in the war that is approaching. One is left, indeed, with a sense that he proves a little too much; that his stainless figure might emerge just spotted here and there if one had the full materials before one. Certainly, if half of what he argues is true, we need a new Esher Committee to revise the system of military training from top to bottom. If in the art of war the civilian can see so much, and always so rightly, one wonders whether there is any advantage in professional competence. The alternative hypothesis would appear to be that Mr. Lloyd George was a heaven-sent genius who is an exception to all the rules. That may be so; yet anyone who has read his recent pronouncements on Hitlerite Germany will be tempted to conclude that either his hand has lost its cunning, or that there is a definite limit (of which he is unaware) to his insight.

But he is certainly a brilliant and persuasive advocate. He marshals his facts with a force and a tenacity by which it is impossible not to be impressed. Sometimes the narrative tells us less than we might have hoped. The rejection, for instance, of the peace overtures of 1917 is here represented as inevitable. Looking back, is it so clear that Lord Lansdowne was wrong? Is it so clear that the policy of the knock-out blow left Europe better off than would have been the case if a peace by negotiation had been attempted? Mr. Lloyd George takes his stand on the impossible attitude of the German authorities; there could be no peace so long as German militarism did not abate its pretensions. Was it quite so certain as he assumes? And from his conclusion, does the Peace of Versailles directly follow—that peace which, with its aftermath, must haunt Mr. Lloyd George like Banquo's ghost. Here, at any rate, he has no hesitations. He rid us of German militarism. In its place we have the menace of Hitlerism. It is cold comfort to know that Mr. Lloyd George is convinced that Hitler wants peace. Granted the premises of his war-policy, he could hardly avoid that conclusion.

The chapter on Soviet Russia is an interesting one; though it reveals that even after all these years Mr. Lloyd George has no real appreciation of what the November Revolution implied. Not everyone will accept his picture of Korniloff the patriot. Not everyone, either, will find it easy to give him the clean bill of health he seems to require over intervention in Russia. But this leads one to a wider conclusion that is, I think, implicit in all Mr. Lloyd George's discussion so far. At no point had he any real insight into the economic character of the struggle he was directing. That the war was a direct expression of the effort of world capitalism to transcend the contradictions in which it had become involved does not occur to him. He still accepts, as I read his argument, the legendary account of the war as a struggle between right and wrong. He still thinks of history as primarily made by men who can will a given end and, if they have the necessary capacities, secure its triumph. To himself he is the man who triumphed over the evil and incompetence he confronted. Russia went out of the war because Lenin was a bigger man than Kerensky. The vast, impalpable forces in the grip of which men so largely are do not appear to concern him. Like the supreme actor that he is, the passionate self-absorption in his role enables him to act all such rivals off the stage. Other men have taken the view of history as the biography of great men; yet that simplicity will, I think, appear excessive to most of those who consider its implications.

One item in this volume deserves an emphatic underlining. Mr. Lloyd George recounts in detail the effort of Colonel Repington (then the correspondent of the *Morning Post*) to overthrow him by the publication of confidential documents. The result was a fine for violation of the Press Regulations—a fine for an offence which, on Mr. Lloyd George's showing, was equivalent to a revelation to the German High Command of our confidential plans. It is worth remarking that this display of patriotism, which in a Labour newspaper would certainly have involved far heavier penalties, seems in nowise to have disturbed the prestige of Repington and his associates. They appear to have applied to themselves a code of behaviour which they would be the first to denounce in their opponents. But the whole incident is a very revealing picture of those contacts between the Army and the Tory party which still raise grave problems for the future.

HAROLD J. LASKI

THE PROMISED LAND

Palestine on the Eve. By LADISLAS FARAGO. *Putnam.* 10s. 6d.

Thy Neighbour. By LORD MELCHETT. *Frederick Muller.* 7s. 6d.

No political issue of recent times has more clearly cut across party divisions than that which has arisen as a result of the disturbances in the land that was promised to both Jew and Arab. Liberal, Labour and Conservative statesmen have rivalled one another in their enthusiasm for the Jewish cause; all have clamoured for the more ruthless suppression of Arab terrorism. Mr. Farago's book should help us to discover how much justification there may be for this impressive unanimity. It is hastily written and contains certain inaccuracies, yet the author possesses one supreme qualification for his task. He is able to present the Arab case without being anti-Jewish; he can applaud the achievements of the Jews without writing a Zionist tract. In a book on Palestine this virtue covers a multitude of sins, and for those who wish to obtain a really enlightening picture of the present Arab rebellion Mr. Farago has performed a real service.

It is difficult to resist the appeal of the Jewish case. For generations the Jewish immigrant has suffered in some ghetto in Eastern Europe. When he boards the ship at Trieste he takes with him the aspirations not merely of a lifetime, but of twenty centuries of oppression. As he sits in the cafés in the Jaffa road in Jerusalem or walks along the promenade in Tel Aviv, he breathes for the first time in his life the air of freedom. And with him he has brought a measure of economic prosperity which the

most fervent Zionist never dared to expect. Is not the case impregnable? Unfortunately, the Left-wing parties in this country which might have been most fulsome in their enthusiasm for the experiment have another and older tradition which it would be perilous to betray. The Labour Party is at any rate formally committed to a policy of opposition to imperialism; Liberals, even in the days of Mr. Gladstone's occupation of Egypt, wielded the big stick with suitable reticence. Terrorism in Bengal, we have argued, was as much the result as the cause of oppressive legislation. Natives in Kenya should be guaranteed an indefeasible right to their lands which no interest of the settlers should be allowed to override. In Iraq and in Syria we have strenuously condemned the wholesale bombardment of the Arab population. Finally, Bernard Shaw has for all time uncovered the intransigent nature of nationalism. "All demonstrations," he says, "of the virtues of a foreign government, though often conclusive, are as useless as demonstrations of the superiority of artificial teeth, glass eyes, silver windpipes and patent wooden legs to the natural products." Cannot all these arguments be invoked by the Arabs or must we now approve the same methods which throughout British history have been shown to be futile in Ireland, India, Egypt and the Near East?

Mr. Farago wisely does not attempt an answer. He confines himself to a description of the forces at work in Palestine and gives much of the detail on which a judgment may be formed. Lord Melchett is less cautious, for he sees the Palestine experiment as the triumphant conclusion in a tragic history. He does not hide his fear lest the work should fail owing to weakness in the face of opposition from "a handful of Arab agitators." Having escaped from pogroms in Germany and worse horrors in Poland, the Jew has now to face terrorism in Palestine, and the cry goes up once again, "Were there no graves in Egypt that you must bring us here?" Yet eloquent as is Lord Melchett's appeal, one doubts whether Zionism does in fact provide a solution to the Jewish problem. The plight of the Jew throughout the ages was created by economic pressure, pressure which divorced him from the land and drove him into a few insecure and unpopular professions. And the solution, too, must be an economic one. Only when the European nations have no further use for scapegoat-hunting to hide the poverty of their political faiths will they be able to say with the magnanimity of a Turkish Sultan of the days of the Spanish Inquisition, "What, call ye this Ferdinand wise—he who depopulates his own country in order to enrich mine?"

Lord Melchett advocates a different procedure. He invokes the name of every imperialist from Joseph Chamberlain to Ramsay MacDonald and proposes an open alliance between Zionism and British imperialism. For the Jews, this is a dangerous game to play. Of his own free will, Lord Melchett chooses the alliance of an Empire which throughout half its territories practises a racialism hardly less odious than that of the Hitler regime. At the same time, he scorns the comradeship of a movement which has from its inception recognised anti-Semitism and racial prejudice for the damnable thing that it is. Lord Melchett takes a justifiable pride in the indestructibility of his race. That mighty tradition has not been maintained by a series of bargains and pacts with those in authority; nor would it easily survive a treaty which might entail the bludgeoning of the Arab peoples of Palestine. In *Thy Neighbour* every Arab claim is blithely discounted, yet the whole book gives convincing proof of the one item in their case which cannot be disproved by statistics—the fear of eventual Jewish domination. "I look forward," says Lord Melchett, "to the day when Palestine and Transjordan, as a single political entity, will form a self-governing unit within the ambit of the British Empire, occupying a position of no inconsiderable importance in the general scheme of that Empire, strategically, commercially, and intellectually, defended by a population of several million loyal Jews, bound in common citizenship with the Empire by every attribute of human affection and self-interest. . . . The presence of three million Jews would remove forever the possibility of a successful armed rising to destroy the effects of the Mandatory policy." The whole plan is inviting in its simplicity; the Zionists will supply the armed men and the only contribution expected from the British Empire will be the necessary aeroplanes and poison gas. Such a programme could only be carried into effect by the perpetration of a crime not altogether dissimilar from Mussolini's exploit in Abyssinia. If this is the meaning of Zionism, there will be little hope of peace and no secure future for the Jews in a country in which neither the British nor the Jews will in the last resort have the dominant voice.

MICHAEL FOOT

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NEW NOVELS

Gone With the Wind. By MARGARET MITCHELL. *Macmillan.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Story of the Hundred Days. By JOSEPH ROTH. Transl. by MORAY FIRTH. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Flying Shadow. By JOHN LLEWELYN RHYS. *Faber and Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Calf of Paper. By SHOLEM ASCH. Transl. by EDWIN and WILLA MUIR. *Gollancz.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Elder Daughter. By MARGARET ILES. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Wind Blows Over. By WALTER DE LA MARE. *Faber and Faber.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Steam Packet. By DAVID MATHEW. *Longmans.* 6*s.*

The Hedge and the Horse. By HILAIRE BELLOC. *Cassell.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

For the mammoth novel, as for the monster vegetable marrow, a certain section of the public continues to display an almost idolatrous regard. In the case of Miss Margaret Mitchell's gigantic saga of the Old South (proudly advertised by its publishers as several times the length of an ordinary novel, running to four hundred thousand words, or more than a thousand closely printed pages) these feelings of wonder and admiration will be intensified by the knowledge that, in America, the book sold two hundred thousand copies within the first month; while complacent critics —like goggling horticulturists clustered round the kingly vegetable's frame—saluted it with such epithets as "throbbing," "absorbing," "thrilling," "breath-taking," "powerful," "panoramic," or announced that it "shook them" to their inmost core. Incidentally (we learn from the publisher's blurb) *Gone With the Wind* was seven years a-growing; and the last eight months of that elephantine period of gestation were devoted by the authoress to checking the various historical references of which she had made use. There is no doubt—whatever one may think of its ultimate literary value—that *Gone With the Wind* is an uncommonly thorough and painstaking piece of work; and one must add that, even though Miss Mitchell's is not a book one might *choose* to read—did one read only to gratify one's private taste—it is easy enough, when one has taken the plunge, to go on reading. "Readable" is an epithet that it actually merits. Miss Mitchell is the kind of story-teller whose gift is completely independent of any other quality that she may or may not possess. Her style, on the whole, is extremely banal, her rendering of character seems to owe more to her study of fiction than to her observation of human life; yet the narrative itself is smooth and abundant. It is never distinguished, but rarely dull. It is unreal—with the unreality of an exciting stage-show.

Yes, it is not difficult to understand the book's success. At a time when the average reader is anxious—not to reach a new view of life through the medium of a work of art—but with the help of art (or what passes for art) to escape from the companionship of his everyday problems, Miss Mitchell opens the door into a universe where those problems have lost their sting or tend to reappear in some agreeably romantic guise. Moreover, *Gone With the Wind* has historical interest. Miss Mitchell is herself a Southerner and was brought up (we are informed) in a family circle where the Civil War was constantly discussed but Robert E. Lee's defeat and surrender were passed over in loyal silence. She has a deep feeling for the period of which she writes; and something of that emotion has been transferred to her story, which is at its best when it is least personal and sticks most closely to the social and political background of the age. Scarlett is a romantic but unconvincing creature. A "proud beauty," in the finest head-tossing, eye-flashing, fan-flirting tradition of stage and story-book, she goes through the horrors of the Civil War—comparatively, how mild and unalarming its "horrors" seem to-day!—loses a husband and marries, *en deuxième noces*, a war-profiteer, a dashing gambler and speculator, hand-in-glove with the Yankee politicians and carpet-baggers who, after the war, crossed the Mason-Dixon line and descended to feast on the corpse of the Old South. Naturally, Scarlett's remarriage is considered scandalous. But Scarlett O'Hara is accustomed to having her own way; and, even when she and her handsome gambler husband have run aground amid a tangle of hideous matrimonial reefs, she does not altogether repent of her bargain. The conclusion of the story (which scarcely deserves retelling) is sentimental and forced; but the Civil War scenes and the description of the South during the ghastly "reconstruction" that followed the war are remarkably well done. As often happens in a novel of this type, the background is much more vivid than the personages to whom it is supposed to act as setting.

Gone With the Wind has numerous virtues. It is a better book, for example, than Herr Joseph Roth's *Story of the Hundred Days*, a picturesque narrative which deals alternately with Napoleon—whose secret reflections during the final crisis of his career are now given to the public—and with a young washer-woman who works in the palace laundries and who is wildly and hopelessly enamoured both of the man and of the resplendent legend by which he is surrounded. Again the background is more interesting than the characters. Herr Roth writes with considerable poetic feeling; and his vignettes of Napoleonic pomp and of the great imperial apartments in the Tuileries—with their thousands of glassy-winged bees, their gilt-bronze eagles, sphinxes and chimeras—are lively and fascinating. But the novelist has made a gallant attempt to perform an almost hopeless task. There was much in Napoleon's character that was extremely commonplace; judged from some aspects, he was a small man—on a colossal scale; but for Herr Roth he is less a human being than a poetic abstraction. His book includes long passages of literary dithyramb. And a prose-poem, dressed up as a novel, makes tiresome reading.

Mr. Rhys is contemporary and realistic. Flying (his publishers point out) has hitherto received very little attention from modern novelists; and Mr. Rhys remedies this defect with the tale of a young aviator attached to a private flying club—of his love-affair and of the appalling tragedy that cuts it short. *The Flying Shadow* is a difficult book to criticise. In some respects, Mr. Rhys is unusually successful; he manages, for instance, to convey the excitement of the aviator's life and to explain the jealous and exclusive passion that binds him to his work; but the dialogue is often so weak as to be rather embarrassing. Mr. Rhys would appear to have made a close study of American models. Alas! where American idiom may produce a telling and staccato effect, English slang—particularly slang of the froth-blowing, old-school-tie variety in which Mr. Llewelyn Rhys seems to specialise —is usually as flat and vulgar as it is ineffective. In *The Flying Shadow*, whole pages are given up to *chin-chinning* and *cheeriohing*

THY NEIGHBOUR

As he stood in a manure pit at the Oranienburg concentration camp the Rabbi of Rathenau was compelled by the Nazi guards to deliver a "lecture" on Judaism. He began, "The Jewish, in common with other religions, is based upon the Ten Commandments and upon the beautiful Biblical injunction, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.'" Here the Nazis shouted, "Stop, you pig; we'll teach you what loving one's neighbour means."

Practically outlawed in more than one European country and menaced by Fascism all over the world, the only solution for the Jews is to have a home of their own. It is for this home that Lord Melchett, one of the leading Zionists in England, pleads in

THY NEIGHBOUR

which is just out, price 7/6. No one reading this book can fail to arrive at a better understanding of the Jewish people's aims and achievements in Palestine, and sympathise with them in their efforts to free themselves from the Fascist yoke. The author discusses fully the whole question of the Arab-Jewish dispute. There are illustrations and maps.

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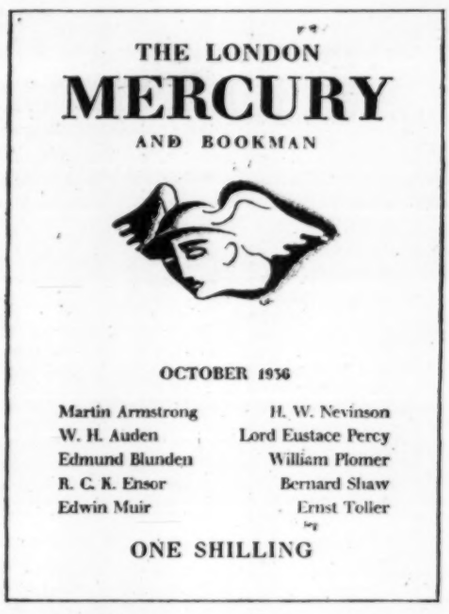

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of the most dismal and disjointed sort, while the protagonists absorb innumerable pink gins with one elbow insecurely balanced on the club bar. Yet, in spite of a certain strain of vulgarity and of certain clumsinesses (which will, no doubt, have been eliminated by the time Mr. Rhys publishes his next book), *The Flying Shadow* is an interesting and readable novel. The characters are just sufficiently real for their purpose; and the atmosphere of intense excitement, broken up by huge stretches of intolerable tedium, is very cleverly brought out.

Whereas Mr. Rhys is a new novelist, feeling around him a little diffidently and hesitantly for an individual technique, Mr. Sholem Asch (at least, as far as one can judge from translation) has long ago mastered all the tricks of the trade and, in doing so, has lost something of his literary freshness. *The Calf of Paper* is soundly but dully constructed. Nevertheless, the book is worth reading; for once again it tells the astonishing story of the German inflation and depicts the period of chaos and wretchedness that prepared the way for the advent of the National-Socialist party. From a Jewish standpoint, Mr. Asch writes of the fate of the German Jews, summing up their fate in the tragedy of Hans Bodenheimer, whose Nordic mistress is assassinated by a Nazi fanatic of her own blood. Meanwhile, the prosperous Bodenheimer business has been bought up by a disreputable Jewish adventurer who reaches Germany from Russia after the revolution. The head of the firm commits suicide. Adolf, the most likeable of the three Bodenheimer uncles, leaves the Fatherland as a voluntary exile.

As depressing as *The Calf of Paper*, though in a very different way, is Miss Margaret Iles' *Elder Daughter*. By the time she has achieved marriage and middle age, her protagonist is possessed of a thoroughly unpleasant disposition; and, thanks to a careful analysis of her early life, Miss Iles is able to show just how that disposition had originated. Eileen was the "clever one" of the Weatherspoon family; and this meant that, during adolescence, she was obliged to over-tax her strength, overload her not really receptive mind and forgo all kinds of pleasures that her younger sister accepted as a matter of course. She grows up grasping, suspicious and secretive. Miss Iles employs a bleak but effective prose style; and her picture of existence behind the counter of a small draper's shop, and of junketings in the local Baptist chapel, is gruesome and horribly absorbing at the same time. . . . Unlike the majority of writers represented in this list, Mr. de la Mare is concerned primarily to create a work of art, to the exclusion of political and social problems. *The Wind Blows Over* contains eleven stories, carefully balanced, harmoniously written, planned in a mood which suggests a mixture of Sheridan Lefanu and Henry James—the Henry James who wrote *The Altar of the Dead*. All are quiet and evocative to the verge of shadowiness: a crazy old woman in the Park entertaining a runaway little girl with odd rambling reminiscences; a provincial lecturer who encounters the ghost of Edgar Allan Poe; the unsuccessful author of a "slim volume" surreptitiously distributing his unsold copies; a middle-aged recluse in an empty house—the last story being probably the best in the collection.

Also a deliberate and careful artist is Mr. David Mathew. His subject is an early-Victorian cross-Channel packet, carrying a freight of distinguished visitors and distinguished visitors' servants, which grounds on a sand-bank within sight of Calais. There is no actual danger, but some nervousness and confusion; and, having introduced us to the various men and women on board—who range from an important Central European dignitary to an English groom—Mr. Mathew takes advantage of the accident to study them in greater detail. Anyone who reads modern English and American novels knows how tiresome a device an accident involving numerous ill-assorted passengers is likely to be; but Mr. Mathew is too subtle a story-teller to resort to any of the ordinary dramatic dodges; and the result is a small satisfying composition, so neatly and clearly executed that, while we are reading, we never pause to ask ourselves exactly what *Steam Packet* is "all about." Indeed, were such a question put, we might find it difficult to propound at once a definite or coherent answer. *Steam Packet* is not "about" anything, but relies for its charm on the delicacy of its observation and the unobtrusive felicity of the author's prose. Here and there, the "period" flavour is a little too strong; but these whiffs of quaintness should not detract from the reader's enjoyment.

Quaint—decidedly quaint—is *The Hedge and the Horse*. Of Mr. Belloc's new satirical novel it need only be said that, though it would seem an amusing book enough if it were published by any other writer, it is very far from being the best Belloc. Where is that abounding poetic verve which made *Cautionary Tales*, *The Modern Traveller* and Mr. Belloc's own version of Debrett such instructive portraits of the late-Victorian age? In *The Hedge and the Horse*, Mr. Belloc's Rosinante is spurred into a gentle and continuous jog-trot, but never breaks into one of its old exuberant gallops—as, for example, in the lachrymose Lord Lundy's interview with his aged grandpapa, the Duke, which culminates in the terrifying malediction:

Go out and govern New South Wales!

The story is entertaining but a trifle thin. Wilfred and Bill—the young man who can't look over a hedge without getting into trouble, and the good-natured desperado who can appropriate a whole horse with complete impunity—are amusing puppets who creak at the joints as they cross the stage; they divert us but we very soon forget them. The author's numerous asides are often distracting. But, like G. K. Chesterton's pencil illustrations, they help to give the book a pleasantly old-fashioned air.

PETER QUENNELL

"That's All Very Well,"

people say, "but how's it going to work?" The question, of course, is one that is constantly put to uphold in public and in private the theory that what this country needs is a whacking great revolution; and that not until the means of production and distribution are in the hands of a civilised government (as opposed to the hands of uncivilised producers) can mankind hope to enjoy the fruits of its labours.

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May we suggest, therefore, here and now, that you should not expose constructive doctrines to the jeers of silly men? We've published a book that should render abortive the laughter (and alter what minds are left to them) of the Colonel Blimps and even some others we know.

It's called *Britain Without Capitalists;* and it's written by a group of technicians and economists. It shows perfectly clearly how industry and its appendices can be taken from those who now abuse them, and, without hitch, be made to function for the common good. Price 8*s.* 6*d.*, handsomely produced.

Maybe that doesn't interest you. We hope it does, both for your own sake, and for ours, and the bookseller's from whom you should get this book.

If he hasn't got it in stock, curb your impatience for 24 hours, while he gets it. Rome, if we may coin a phrase, was not built in a day.

STOP PRESS: Frank Pitcairn's *Reporter in Spain* will be on sale next week-end. Pitcairn is one of the most famous of the younger correspondents. He saw the Civil War from the angle of the militiaman. This book is political news. Order it now from your bookseller. (2*s.* 6*d.*).

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I Commit to Your Intelligence. By REGINALD CHURCHILL. *Dent.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

Tests of Ability for Secondary School Courses. By F. M. EARLE. *University of London Press.* 5*s.*

Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools. By Various Authors. *Oxford University Press.* 4*s.* 6*d.*

Education of To-day. Edited by E. D. LABORDE. *Cambridge University Press.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

There is no generally accepted theory of education in this country. Educational ideas and reforms are usually tried out first in "crank" schools and then adopted in a watered-down form by normal public schools and secondary schools. The public school and the secondary school know little of one another, and except for the practice amongst "superior" secondary schools of adopting the less admirable sides of public school life—house rivalry, the O.T.C., lengthy chapels and compulsory games—there

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is little commerce of ideas between them. During the last few years, however, there have been stirrings. People have been asking strange questions, such as "What sort of preparation for the world are our schools giving their pupils?" and "Is our present educational system the fool-proof Jacob's ladder of opportunity we used to think it?" All four of these books show a tendency for educational ideas to penetrate the English school. The next thing to go will be the constitution.

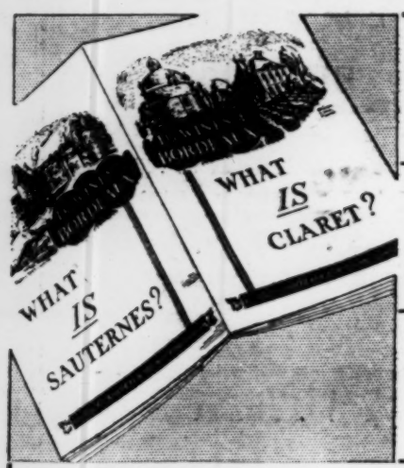
I Commit to Your Intelligence bravely faces the facts of life with a nervous stare. It describes itself as a "constructive guide for young people in the matters of sex and religion," and it brings these "matters" very close together. Whether sex and religion ought to be associated with one another in the mind of the adolescent is, psychologically speaking, highly debatable. If, however, Mr. Churchill's book ever gets into circulation among schoolboys, it may do real service by killing the traditional schoolmaster's lie that anyone who ever masturbates becomes automatically an imbecile. Unfortunately, Mr. Churchill fails to avoid the Scylla and Charybdis of all those who write on sex—pornography and sanctimoniousness. Mr. Churchill insists on the beauty and holiness of normal sexuality so much that it is to be feared that a possible reaction to his book might be an interest in perversions. Nevertheless, *I Commit to Your Intelligence* is an advance on former books of its type.

Tests of Ability for Secondary School Courses is a Scottish inquiry into the validity of entrance examinations and mental tests for children at the beginning of their secondary school career. It is well known that the "eleven plus" examination customary in England is a very rough and ready method of separating those who are fit for advanced education from those who are not. Mental tests and teachers' estimates are sometimes used as a supplement and substitute for this examination, and Dr. Earle has carried out experiments over some years to discover what prophetic or diagnostic value these methods of testing have. His conclusions are cautious and all the more interesting for that reason. If the people who set and mark these examinations, which may change the entire shape of the examinee's life, could be prevailed on to read this book, and carry out similar research for themselves, their complacency would be healthily disturbed.

Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools deals with so many aspects of its enormous subject for criticism to do more than make vague gestures of approval. Many schoolmasters feel that since most of the greater forces of publicity are in the hands of dangerous rogues or more dangerous fools, it should be the duty of the teacher to offer his pupils some antidote to the mass of poisonous humbug which newspaper owners, politicians, and advertisers pour into their ears. And many teachers do their best to foster the critical powers of their pupils with this in mind. But they feel that "the demands of the School Certificate" make any thorough training in citizenship impossible. This book is a practical contribution to the solution of the problem. Its implied politics are social-democratic. It is pleasantly free from the nonsense which generally clusters round the word "Service." And it is written by people who are well aware of the practical difficulties which must be overcome.

Education of To-day is a collection of addresses delivered at a Young Public School Masters' Conference at Harrow. It contains an admirable essay on "The Teaching of Current Events," by C. H. K. Marten, an unusually clear-headed diatribe on "The Writing of English," by J. Dover Wilson, a talk on "Personality and War," by Wickham Steed, and a dozen other informal lectures by distinguished people on the ideals and problems of education. If one-half of the suggestions made by these lecturers could be put into action in our schools Utopia would be upon us in no time. There are, however, few signs in this book of an awareness of the importance or even the existence of the secondary school. Dr. L. P. Jacks, for example, is lucid and stimulating on physical illiteracy and the wider possibilities of physical culture, but it seems to have come to him as a surprise that "in a secondary school I recently investigated I was told that out of 600 pupils not more than three or four pass on annually to the universities." Thanks largely to the fact that our business men have heard that "matriculation" is a good thing, a colossal percentage of our schoolboys is being laboriously prepared for universities which they will never see. The tragic side of the absurd business is that they are wasting time which might be used in providing them with vocational training, knowledge of the modern world, and anti-propagandist gas-masks. Our educational theorists really ought to "investigate a secondary school" a little more often.

FREDERICK LAWS



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CORRESPONDENTS IN ABYSSINIA

Abyssinia Stop Press. Edited by LADISLAS FARAGO. *Hale.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Editor of this collection achieved a great success with his *Abyssinia on the Eve*, an entertaining if rather over-coloured account of a visit to Ethiopia made when the country was just "coming into the news" in 1935, but before hostilities had begun. Since then Europe has possibly heard too much about the war from the very limited angle of the journalists who tried desperately to extract some sense and interest out of the crazy and lamentable business. In England a specially deep feeling of shame makes most people unwilling to read any more about the subject, and Mr. Farago can hardly expect to sponsor another "best-seller." Yet these six chapters by different special correspondents, three from the Italian side, three from the Ethiopian, are not only of great interest in themselves, but they also throw some light on the way in which future "history" is likely to be made.

The most important contribution is undoubtedly that of General Fuller, a soldier's account of the Italian campaign. He makes a number of interesting points which have hardly been appreciated in England. The first was the extreme caution of the Italians during the early months, based partly on a belief that the people would gradually come over to their side without much fighting. With the appointment of Badaglio an entirely new policy was adopted, dictated presumably by conditions in Europe. Mr. Farago's account of his experiences in Northern Ethiopia confirms this view that there was no serious fighting till January. Then the Italians decided to take what was, at first sight, little more than a sporting chance. They "shortened the odds" considerably by the use of poison gas, which was chiefly valuable as a kind of protective screen for their flanks. They also learnt to bomb groups of men rather than scatter explosives indiscriminately over villages, etc. But their ultimate victory was, as General Fuller points out, due to the collapse of an undisciplined army, led by Rases who were completely ignorant about modern war,

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FRIENDS' HALL LECTURES

Autumn, 1936

THE Autumn course of lectures will be held this year in the Friends' Hall, Euston Road, N.W.1, on six successive Thursday evenings, beginning on Thursday, October 22nd, at 8.30. The general title of the course will be "THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME."

The dates, subjects and lecturers arranged are as follows:—

1. Thursday, 22nd October. **"CAN CAPITALISM SURVIVE?"**
   Chairman: THE RT. HON. DR. C. ADDISON.
   Lecturer: Mr. G. D. H. COLE.
2. Thursday, 29th October. **"THE FUTURE OF SOVIET COMMUNISM."**
   Chairman: LADY NOEL-BUXTON.
   Lecturer: MR. SIDNEY WEBB.
3. Thursday, 5th November. **"DICTATORSHIPS: WHAT NEXT?"**
   Chairman: F. W. PETHICK-LAWRENCE, M.P.
   Lecturer: MR. WICKHAM STEED.
4. Thursday, 12th November. **"ECONOMIC NATIONALISM: CAN IT CONTINUE?"**
   Chairman: RT. HON. WEDGWOOD BENN.
   Lecturer: SIR ARTHUR SALTER, K.C.B.
5. Thursday, 19th November. **"THE NEXT WAR: CAN IT BE AVOIDED?"**
   Chairman: MISS A. SUSAN LAWRENCE.
   Lecturer: PROFR. P. M. S. BLACKETT.
6. Thursday, 26th November. **"HUMAN SURVIVAL AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS."**
   Chairman: DR. HUGH DALTON, M.P.
   Lecturer: PROFR. LANCELOT HOGBEN.

Admission will be by ticket for the course, which can be applied for at once, or for each lecture separately. As the accommodation is limited, preference will be given to applicants for tickets for the whole course. Applications for single tickets will therefore be reserved until October 14th, 1936, after which the remaining seats will be allotted according to priority of application.

The price of tickets for numbered and reserved stalls is one guinea for the course of six, or five shillings for a single lecture; for numbered back stalls and front rows of gallery seats, twelve shillings for the course, or three shillings for a single lecture; for numbered back rows of stalls and gallery, six shillings for the course, or one shilling and sixpence for a single lecture.

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SIDNEY and BEATRICE WEBB'S Soviet Communism: Dictatorship or Democracy? (early Oct., 32 pp. **3d.**)

jealous of each other, and inconsiderate for their men. By the help of mechanical transport, poison gas and complete control of the air, a modern army can undoubtedly force its way from any one point to another, though they may be comparatively inefficient against a scattered force. The Abyssinians would insist on massing their levies.

Correspondents on the Ethiopian side, whose queer experiences and limited sources of information are amusingly described by Mr. Emeny and Mr. Balfour, have been blamed for taking too optimistic a view of Abyssinia's chances. The reviewer, who must plead guilty to making the same mistake, found that this book helped him to understand what blind guides any correspondents are likely to be in future wars, fought with modern weapons over large areas. They can no longer go and find out for themselves, but are either herded near a headquarters which only releases what it wants to be known, or else hang around the fringe of an enormous and confused area, picking up unreliable items of news.

There are some admirable illustrations, and the photograph of "Abyssinians Learning the Roman Salute" should be in every philo-Fascist's home. Mussolini's portrait makes a wonderful totem, and the attitude of the three worshippers is perfect.

G. T. GARRATT

ENGLISH CHURCH SCREENS

English Church Screens. By AYLMER VALLANCE. *Batsford.* 25s.

This book is in the Batsford tradition of sumptuous ecclesiological production, and Mr. Aylmer Vallance is the last survivor of that group of great ecclesiologists which included J. C. Cox, Francis Bond and F. E. Howard. His book on screens has long been expected, and now that it has arrived with nearly three hundred illustrations, some of them coloured, and many pages of scholarly and readable text, it becomes the standard work on the subject.

Of the great roods with which the book starts no more than a few battered fragments survive in England, and these show a suffering Saviour rather than a triumphant one. After subsequent chapters dealing exhaustively with the celure over the rood, painted tympana and dooms behind it and doom windows which are to be seen in a few churches, Mr. Vallance devotes the remainder and larger part of his book to screens and rood lofts. Many screens survive. Indeed they have never been declared illegal in the Church of England. At no time have they had any didactic significance since they merely divide the priest's part of the church from that of the people. Mr. Baring Gould, once misled, according to Mr. Vallance, by "some witless dotard of a bucolic sextoness," thought otherwise, but it is easy to prove him wrong.

The earliest screen in England which Mr. Vallance can discover is that at Thurcaston, Leicestershire. It is wooden and *c.* 1220. The latest, if we are to exclude Tractarian additions, is that at Crwys Morchard in Devon, dated 1814, though he does not mention it. Those who destroyed screens in the Georgian and Victorian times were not only acting illegally, but also removing an essential feature of all Gothic churches which depend upon mystery and vista opening to vista, whatever their size.

The rood loft, on the other hand, was condemned as illegal in Elizabeth's reign. The loft was originally built purely for part singing and had no connection with either the rood above it or the screen below it. Structurally, in many counties, it was separate. A few lofts had altars on them, and early Puritans, whose hyper-Calvinism made any form of music in church intolerable, used these altars as an excuse for the destruction of all rood lofts as idolatrous. The only result was that the choir moved to the west end of the church, and the west gallery was the direct successor of the rood loft. The choir did not move into the sacred enclosure of the chancel until Victorian times. It is significant that in Wales, where part singing has always been popular, several rood lofts survive.

Mr. Vallance is a strong medievalist, and refers to "the tasteless periods of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries," and to "dexterous greengroceries in the manner of Grinling Gibbons." More justifiable is his indignation against modern and ignorant incumbents who, with their even stupider churchwardens, abuse a faculty and with dishonest haste tear down medieval and later relics which have survived the Victorians in their churches. The worst cases were the destruction of a rood loft at Hullavington in 1917 and the jazzing up with pseudo-modern paintings of the superb screen at Earls Barton last year. Equally dangerous, he might have added, is the present arty taste of clergymen and their wives who fill a chancel with unstained oak, powder blue hangings and teashop daintiness often infinitely worse than the honest vulgarity of Victorian church furnishing.

The illustrations in this book are all first class, and many of them are from drawings made of churches before "restoration." It is a great pity that no one has troubled to put references to the illustrations throughout Mr. Vallance's text.

JOHN BETJEMAN

EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

Changing Man: The Soviet Education System. By BEATRICE KING. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

It is generally admitted, by all except the most uncompromising enemies of Soviet Russia, that, whatever criticisms may be made of its political and social principles or practices, its treatment of its child population is both interesting and, on the whole, admirable. Everyone concerned will therefore welcome this first full-length study of Soviet education, by a writer who is a fluent speaker of Russian, an educational expert, and an investigator over a wide field.

Mrs. King opens her book with an account of education under the Tsars, and of the first Communist experiments, before she settles down to describe in detail, and with figures so far as they are available, the present state of education as regards organisation, curriculum, general aims, and (very important) the extent to which the ideals are actually in operation. The immediate reflection of a Western reader, obvious as it may seem, is the enormous difference which the existence of a Socialist planned society, and of one whose formation dates from the twentieth century and not from 1789 or 1776 or 1688, makes to the kind of education to be provided. There is in Russia no trace of the dichotomy, so bitterly obvious to teachers in England, between "education" and "life." Education *is* life, while it is going on, and it merges

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In passing, let us say that the Goss brothers have considered setting up a ladies' department, but so far it is no more than an idea.

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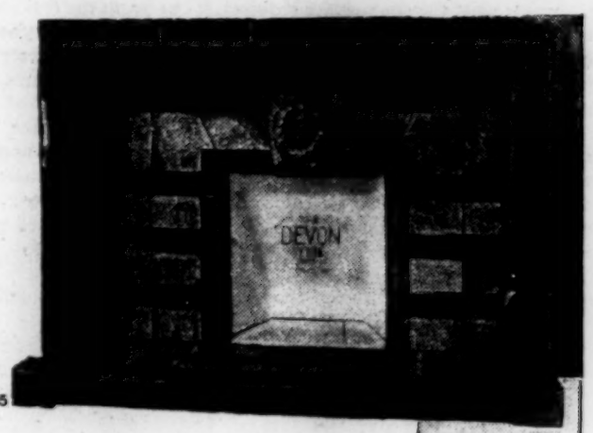

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This is the basic difference which is bound to strike any educationist. Apart from that, there are many passages, notably those dealing with examinations, discipline, the organisation of teachers, the change in curriculum and emphasis since 1932, the education of racial minorities, etc., etc., which will be of great interest to them. Altogether a valuable and a timely book.

OUT-ELBOWING SPACE

Eighteen Poems. By DYLAN THOMAS. New Edition. *Sunday Referee and Parton Bookshop.* 3s. 6d.

Twenty-five Poems. By DYLAN THOMAS. *Dent.* 2s. 6d.

For some time Mr. Dylan Thomas's first book of poems, published two years ago, has been out of print. It is available now in a new edition, and I advise the reader to buy a copy, not only because it is remarkable in itself, but because without it he will find the new volume puzzling in the extreme. Violence, obscurity, immense personal vanity, a preoccupation with sex and death, a love of the crazy image and the staggering conceit—these are likely to be one's first impression of *Twenty-Five Poems*. Poets have juggled with the universe before, ruffling the pages of history like a pack of cards and producing planets from their coat tails, but Mr. Thomas sometimes lets the trick go too far; he, too, is swept away, and the result is mad parody.

> And from the windy West came two-gunned Gabriel,
> From Jesu's sleeve trumped up the king of spots,
> The sheath-decked jacks, queen with a shuffled heart;
> Said the fake gentleman in suit of spades,
> Black-tongued and tipsy from salvation's bottle,
> Rose my Byzantine Adam in the night;
> For loss of blood I fell on Ishmael's plain,
> Under the milky mushrooms slew my hunger,
> A climbing sea from Asia had me down
> And Jonah's Moby snatched me by the hair;
> Cross-stroked salt Adam to the frozen angel
> Pin-legged on pole-hills with a black medusa
> By waste seas when the white bear quoted Virgil
> And sirens singing from our lady's sea-straw.

That, on any account, is bad; it is, however, understandable to one who is familiar with his earlier work, as an attempt, however unsuccessful, to mix wit with violence. Single lines echo the genuine style of:

> The dry Sargasso of the womb
> Gives up its dead to such a working sea. . . .
>
> I see the boys of summer in their ruin
> Lay the gold tithings barren,
> Setting no store by harvest, freeze the soil. . . .
>
> Where once the waters of your face
> Spun to my screws, your dry ghost blows,
> The dead turns up its eye;
> Where once the mermen through your ice
> Pushed up their hair, the dry wind steers
> Through salt and root and roe. . . .
>
> Comes, like a scissors stalking, tailor age. . . .
>
> A candle in the thighs
> Warms youth and seed and burns the seeds of age. . .
>
> There round about your stones the shades
> Of children go who, from their voids,
> Cry to the dolphined sea.

It is an unmistakable imagery, which delights in paradox and finds grandeur unexpectedly. The association of extremes, of summer and decay, lust and death, the forebodings of the child in the womb, the wild geography of the body embracing the universe, appear in poem after poem.

Eighteen Poems—from which I have been quoting—is the record of a volcanic adolescence, and quite unlike any other book I know. Although the poems seem, at a glance, to make a sequence, it will be found not so much that one follows another, as that they form a cluster. A few essential experiences—"birth, and copulation, and death," as Sweeney says—are repeated and varied; each poem drops like a bomb and either explodes with a queer vision of limbs and matchwood or buries itself in earth. Intensity rather than development is the characteristic of Mr. Thomas's mind.

It has taken me a long time to reach his new volume, the *Twenty-Five Poems* published by Dent. I am in a dilemma; they seem to me disappointing. True, I have not read them often enough. But comparing the two volumes I can see that now Mr. Thomas sometimes substitutes force for spontaneity, that he has developed a taste for cosmic joking, numerical conceits and private allusions. Some poems in the older style are chaotic and the rhetoric cracks; on the other hand, the newer ones, though simple enough, are less individual:

> The bread I break was once the oat,
> This wine upon a foreign tree
> Plunged in its fruit;
> Man in the day or wind at night
> Laid the crops low, broke the grape's joy.

This simplicity (repeated in three or four other poems) is in strange contrast to the blowing and spouting, the eerie bombast of the rest of the book. "Now that my symbols have out-elbowed space," one verse begins. Mr. Dylan Thomas is a born fan-faronader. He is also a really original poet; though for the moment, perhaps, wondering which way to turn.

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SHORTER NOTICES

The Crime. By GEORGES BERNANOS. Trans. by ANNE GREEN. *Hale.* 7s. 6d.

There are two ways of raising the hair on a reader's head. One is to describe grisly phenomena in photographic detail and hope for the best; the other is so to *feel* the sinisterness of some event or person that you communicate it through the subtle emphasis of indescribable menace, or inquietude, or misery, given in the usual gestures of life. These are the real springs of fear, which are not really tapped at all by M. Bernanos' murderer found gagged with mud and stones. The chaotic gestures of the criminal are essentially meaningless and, when described, produce a feeling of unreality, which may or may not be accompanied by a brief thrill, but which in any case do not reverberate long enough to

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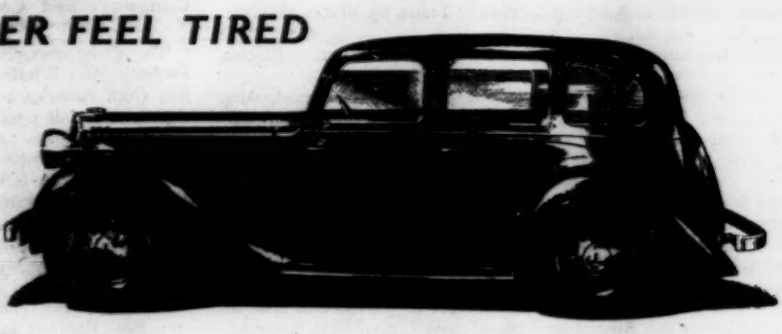

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C. R. Casson 8

achieve the effects of literature. M. Bernanos pulls out all sorts of literary "stops," with a view to realising a sombre grandeur; but the effect is solemn and indigestible. The mystery, which deals with the murder of an old woman in a lonely chateau in the Dauphiny, and with the part played in it by a young priest, is ingenious and it would be surprising if you guessed the solution. Behind this lies a criticism; for apart from the *facts* of the story, it fails in real significance in spite of all the pretentious psychology and elaborate pathos displayed in the telling of it. The translation is good.

Gari-Gari. By HUGO ADOLF BERNATZIK. Trans. by VIVIAN OGILVIE. *Constable.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Stone-Age Bushmen of To-day. By J. R. B. LOVE. *Blackie.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Dinka and their neighbours are probably the best-looking primitive people on earth; the Australian aborigines almost certainly the least attractive. No one who read Mr. Richard Wyndham's fascinating book, *The Gentle Savage*, can have failed to keep a feeling of interest in that arid district of the Sudan where the Dinka warriors tend their flocks and herds; and, though Dr. Bernatzik employs a prose style considerably less vivid and more conventional than Mr. Wyndham's, his photographs (which alone would make *Gari-Gari* worth buying) are almost as good, though not so well reproduced. He is the type of traveller who grinds no political or religious axe. Mr. Love, on the other hand, is a missionary; yet he manages to convince us that his mission has done the Australian "blackfellow" very little harm and possibly some good. In pleasant contrast to the old-fashioned brand of mission-worker, Mr. Love was careful not to break up the original tribal structure, which nothing could replace. His book is an engaging piece of work; and, though simply written, it gives a pleasant picture both of the aborigines and of the missionary himself. In their relationship, which has now extended over many years, each side seems to have shown a very unusual measure of delicacy and common sense.

Animal Life of Yesterday and To-day. By J. MOREWOOD DOWSETT. *Grayson and Grayson.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

This book suffers from a rather too earnest missionary ardour on the part of the author as to "Our duty towards the lesser animals," and begins with a set of platitudes about the superior reasoning powers of man that make one wonder about the intellectual powers of Mr. Dowsett. But if one can forget or stomach the preaching there is a great deal that is worth reading in the account of bull-baiting and cock-fighting, the chapters on the flying-fish and the question of its flight, on waterspouts, on the horse in South America and on animals that are to be found there. If you happen to pick up a camel at a sale anywhere, you should certainly read Mr. Dowsett's defence of that mammal against the slurs cast on it by Kipling, and he gives a series of hints on its keep that should prove useful to those thinking of buying one, either as a pet or as a beast of burden. The author tells some good stories. The book would have been improved if the illustrations had each had a page, instead of being crammed two or three on to each insertion. On the whole, a light book with a good many facts of interest.

Gangways and Corridors. By WINIFRED JAMES. *Philip Allan.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The globe-trotter, like the world he trots, is too much with us. Happily Miss Winifred James is not of that tiresome fraternity. She flits from America to Europe and back, and back again; and from decade to decade; but wherever she may be she is of the place and time. She has her lapses and her off-moments, but she rarely talks for long without saying something. She has an eye and a heart for the social scene, whether it is in a New York slum, the Folies Bergères, or an Embassy reception in Madrid. She likes people, all manner of people, but simple people most, and liking them sees the best in them. Her descriptions are pithy and to the point, and they describe the unusual. An Englishwoman married to an American, she reports to the police here as an alien, and does not like it and says so. She has a sharp word for the American tyrant and the American snob. She has, in fact, given us a book that can be dipped into anywhere and not found wanting.

Secrets of Scotland Yard. By EDWIN T. WOODHALL. *Lane.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Thanks to the vogue of the detective novel, to say nothing of the "news value" of current crime, the Yard is much with us, and in this interesting and informative book Mr. Woodhall, once himself a member of the C.I.D., gives us a brief history of crime detection from the time of the Bow Street Runners to the present day, and, incidentally, takes us behind the scenes of the great machine that functions throughout the country from its centre on the Embankment. Mr. Woodhall describes the hierarchy of the Yard in some detail, and illustrates the methods of latter-day crime detection by quotation of many famous cases in which the C.I.D. demonstrated alike its thoroughness and skill. Not the least interesting of Mr. Woodhall's notes are those dealing with cases in which the culprit is known but goes free because the evidence sufficient for conviction is lacking.

Annals of Maychester: A Chronicle of the Countryside. By S. L. BENSUSAN. *Routledge.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

In the preface he contributes to this study of the Essex scene and the Essex folk, Mr. Cunninghame Graham declares that Mr. Bensusan has done for that county what Hardy did for Dorset. Really, of course, he has done more and less. After reading him we shall not call Essex Bensusan's country, as we call Dorset Hardy's country; on the other hand, we shall readily recognise in the reality, the truth of these presentations of the Essex people, in swift, short stories and sketches. This is history, portraits from the life, and if Mr. Bensusan had nothing more to his credit than the preservation of a pithy dialect which is passing away, he will deserve the thanks of posterity for embalming it in such books as this.

* * *

In his article last week "Myself a Menace," Y.Y. quoted at length from a book without mentioning its title or the name of the author. This book was *Nature Hits Back*, by Macpherson Lawrie, and it is published by Methuen at 5*s.*

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Week-end Competitions

No. 342

Set by Frederick Laws

A friend of mine was recently described, to his considerable annoyance, as "just a NEW STATESMAN sort of creature." We offer a prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea for the best character study of a typical NEW STATESMAN reader. It may be in prose or verse, but must not exceed 200 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Oct. 9.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

FAMOUS FIGURES—

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RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 340

Set by H. L. Morrow

An American critic, Miss Virginia Moore, has, apparently, discovered that what had up till now been innocently assumed to be the words "Love's Farewell" at the top of the MS. of a poem by Emily Brontë, is no less than the name of the authoress's secret lover, a gentleman with the odd name of Louis Parensell. We offer a first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea for a letter from a real Mr. Louis Parensell, late of Keighley, Yorks, now of the Shades, protesting against being mixed up with "these Brontë Girls," whom he had never actually seen but about whose family he had heard plenty of strange gossip. The letter should be addressed to Miss Moore's publishers and should consist of not more than 400 words of good stiff invective.

Report by H. L. Morrow

With the decay in letter-writing, apparently, has set in a decay in invective. Not more than four or five out of the thirty-and-odd entries for this competition would have got beyond the junior clerk in Miss Moore's publisher's office, and even these would probably have been laughed off after lunch. What I wanted was indignation of a roaring, menacing kind, stiff invective: what I got, for the most part, was the sort of a letter a Haworth pew-opener might have composed after the excitement of his first "high-tea" had begun to wear off. I asked for a battery of blunderbuses and instead of these was given a handful of pea-shooters. I expected, too, a little more ingenuity in the devising of a background for Mr. Louis Parensell, in explaining how precisely he came to be possessed of such an odd name, how, obviously a character from Ouida, he came to Yorkshire. "Pax" sketched in, almost convincingly, but not quite, the background of a family exiled to Keighley from Liège, and, alas! otherwise fell flat. "Nyamok," much less convincingly, but more amusingly, attempted to construct the effigy of a member of the Keighley Literary Society and Dramatic Club who was no doubt a figure of some pomposity in his time. L. V. Upward brought up hints of a "Max" cartoon with his complaint that "It is scarcely a matter for wonder that I am being twitted by certain Haworth wraiths who were better acquainted with this unpleasant family than ever I was." Miss R. Maxwell, too, flashed for a moment with a picture of "a very little gentleman, here, a Mr. Swinburne who waves his hands about and talks a lot of stuff about that Emily." Another competitor, amusingly if unconsciously, produced a smile by ascribing the authorship of "The Life and Eager Death of Emily Brontë," to "Virginia Woolfe."

The first prize of two guineas goes to "B. B." for a highly naïve, raw-boned scrap of invective in what I presume to be Yorkshire dialect. Dialect might have been barred by a more scrupulous judge of the competition than myself, but I am prepared to defend "B. B." The second prize goes to William Bliss.

FIRST PRIZE

Dear Sirs,—

If tha knew what Ah'd done to Mrs. Gaskell when she came prying round trying to fish out how far Emily and me had gone tha'd nivver have published yon senseless book by what's her name, Miss Moore isn't it? Sitha, if tha doesn't want to feel t'weight o' my nieve, leave my name out on it, all this talk about t'Bronte lasses and me. Ah knew 'em. We all knew 'em and when Ah wor a young fooil (there's no fooil like a young fooil and that's gospel) it's reight that Ah did think o' going coorting a bit wi' Emily if Ah got t'chance. But what's that to do wi' thee and Miss Moore? Nowt and tha knaws it. Ah've nowt ageanst Emily but Ah nivver set een on her and nivver spoke to her. Ah heerd on her and started sending notes by t'milk lad and she replied, it's true. But when she got to asking if Ah'd black hair and black een and if Ah'd ivver eloped (*eloped*, mind tha, and me already got a pretty little doffer at t'mill in t'family way) Ah wor through, as t'young uns here hev started saying. Ah wrote back and said Ah wor shaping to wed a pretty little doffer at t'mill and Ah asked t'milk lad what she'd said. All reet, she said (according to t'lad) All reet. And good riddance. Tell yon Parensell Ah wor stalled wi' him, fair stalled.

So all this talk about Love's Farewell and dragging me in and poetry and all is the bunk (summat else Ah've picked up here this year or two). If tha's wanting t'truth, tha gurt lying good-for-nowt, tha's got it now. Emily Bronte and me wor nivver nowt to each other. Ah got wed, my bairns wor born honest and t'name's still honest i' Keighla so see tha keeps it out of all thi lying print. Ah'll print *thee* if tha doesn't. Ah'll print summat on thi clock tha wean't forget. They've learnt me here how to make things warm for good-for-nowts like thee, so mind on and tha can tell t'same to that cawf-headed bitch, Miss Moore. Ah'm thick as thieves wi' t'gaffer here, think on, and Ah'll see he has it extra warm for thi boath. As folk say now, Ah'll be seeing tha, drat tha.

Yours waiting to screw thi bloddy neck,
Louis Parensell.

[It should be explained that Mr. Parensell, like other Keighley men of his time, missed his schooling. Also, as a good Yorkshireman, he mixes fair explanation with his invective.]

SECOND PRIZE

Gentlemen—

(—but do not flatter yourselves that this merely conventional address implies any recognition of any claim you may make to that status)—I have been constrained to materialise this letter—a difficult operation on this side of the Styx—by your publication of a book by a certain Miss V. Moore in which she pretends to have discovered that I, Louis Parensell, was, in life, the lover of Emily Brontë.

The law of libel unfortunately does not extend beyond the grave or you would have heard from my Solicitors before this. More unfortunately still my disembodied state prevents me from calling upon you, effectually, with a horse-whip, and I am left with no redress but this very insufficient protest.

I tell you and Miss Moore that I never even knew the woman; though, when I was living at Keighley we used to hear some pretty queer stories about her and her precious sister Charlotte. They were, so far as I knew anything about them, a pair of neurotic spinsters with a half-baked, drunken brother.

I never bothered to read the anaemic stuff they wrote while I lived—I had better things to do—but now that I am conscious of it—(we read by introspection on this side and need not, thank God, buy a book and turn its pages)—I can see very plainly what was the matter with both of them.

We didn't use to talk about Sex-repression and Inhibitions and the rest of your modern Freudian jargon in those days—and I don't propose to now. What we should have said was that, clearly enough, what they both wanted was a good hugging, but that is no reason why you should insult me by suggesting that I filled the bill.

I don't like to say anything rude about a lady—but—but—well, I mean—Emily Brontë—damn it *all!*

I won't stand it. You will destroy the whole edition at once. You may, if you please, reprint the book with some other name—not mine—if you *must* give her a lover. And *at once*—tell Miss Moore—or by God, I'll haunt you both!

Yours indignantly,
Louis Parensell.

Will R.C.H., Shem, W. Leslie Nicholls, Richard Pomfret, Pithecus and Enid G. Bach please send in their names and addresses again as these have been mislaid?

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 196.—A SCRAP OF PAPER

The following fragment was retrieved by the Secret Service from Slyfox's waste-paper basket:

". . . so there are five ciphers altogether, the key to each is a series of three numbers. First series 4, 6, 4; second series 8, 12, 6; third series 6, 12, 8 and so on. You can work out the others, on the lines already explained. There can only be the five series to remember because as you know there are no more regular . . ."

What are the key numbers in the fourth and fifth series?

To solvers. My post-bag has never been so light as during these last two weeks. "The Fourth 'Phone Number" produced only one correct solution; "The Binarian Spy" about half-a-dozen. This week I offer another problem which involves the exercise of a little ingenuity, but this one, I think, is simpler.

PROBLEM 195.—THE BINARIAN SPY

By Prof. Helmut Hasse

Put $b = 1$, $a = 0$. Then, taking each c as a stop, we get a series of numbers in the *binary* scale.

1 100 10110 1001 and so on.

Giving these their value in the *denary* scale, we get:

1 4 22 9, etc.

and now substitution of the corresponding letter-values will give us the hidden message. It is:

ADVISE BOMBARDMENT ARSENAL.

PROBLEM 194.—THE FOURTH 'PHONE NUMBER.

Low's cartoons (and 10 points) go to the solitary solver of this problem: J. S. Waller, 206 Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxford.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

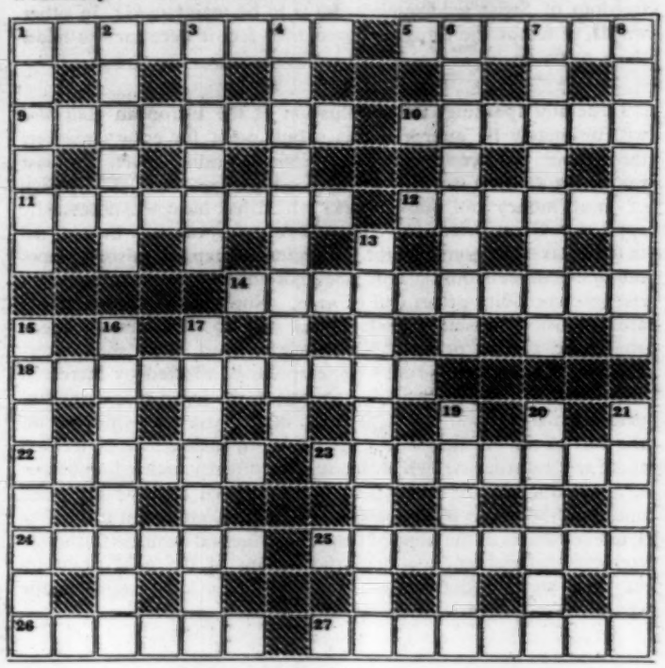
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 343

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday. Prize-winners should address their claims to the Editor.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Mrs. M. B. Youngman, Thorpe Hall, Debenham, Suffolk.

ACROSS

1. The reverse of a long time?
5. You'd expect to find him sponging on people in Bath.
9. An account for manicure, perhaps.
10. In truth, about a confederate.
11. One believes those to whom one gives it.
12. A Japanese noble do I aim to be.
14. A famous volume of woodcraft.
18. Get ownership beforehand to create a good impression.
22. Nelson might suitably have used this exclamation.
23. Concealed in the lining of George's cap a detonator was found.
24. A reign one could have back.
25. A bad place for the sitting?
26. Governor of Sparta.
27. Suitable constitution for a robot fireman.

DOWN

1. His test is inoculative.
2. Weighty matters for one of the cat tribe.
3. Shows the form of battle suitable for a writer.
4. Neither is the game played here nor are the players called Rounders.
6. How 6 balls frightened the batsman.
7. An illuminated round up.
8. Did Boy Blue use one of them as an overlay?
13. Yolk fellows are as surely positive.
15. Welcoming opposite of the close-fisted.
16. Engagement of deep significance.
17. She has an artful smile.
19. Girl that is in Scotland.
20. It's obvious it's the patriarch's dwelling.
21. Press photographers ring the changes on these by the seaside.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

S	A	L	V	E	R	S	■	O	X	O	N	I	A	N
A	■	A	■	S	■	P	■	P	■	N	■	C	■	U
D	A	T	E	S	T	A	M	P	■	H	O	I	S	T
D	■	E	■	A	■	R	■	O	■	O	■	N	■	A
L	A	T	H	Y	■	R	U	S	H	L	I	G	H	T
E	■	R	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	I	■	■	■	E
R	E	A	C	H	E	D	■	R	E	D	U	C	E	S
■	■	I	■	O	■	■	■	A	■	O	■	■	■	■
C	O	N	F	U	S	E	■	C	R	Y	P	T	I	C
O	■	■	■	S	■	S	■	A	■	■	■	S	■	A
C	O	F	F	E	E	C	U	P	■	R	O	W	E	L
K	■	L	■	T	■	A	■	I	■	I	■	O	■	D
L	L	A	N	O	■	P	O	T	B	O	I	L	E	R
E	■	S	■	P	■	E	A	■	J	■	D	■	O	■
S	C	H	I	S	M	S	■	L	I	A	I	S	O	N

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THE PASSING OF THE GOLD "BLOC"—THE TECHNIQUE OF ADJUSTMENT—MARKET REACTIONS—GOLD SHARES—WESTINGHOUSE AND CONSOLIDATED SIGNAL

THE news of the passing of the gold *bloc* was received in the City with great satisfaction. Not the sort of satisfaction we feel when a rich relative dies and leaves us his profits. British speculators for the most part had become tired of selling the gold currencies forward, so that most of the profits of devaluation have fallen into the pockets of foreigners who have hoarded gold in London or bought sterling or dollar securities. Taking the estimate of £200 millions as a conservative figure of the foreign hoards of gold in London banks and safe deposits, the profits on devaluation, when the gold has been converted back into the devalued currencies, may be around £80 millions—or not less than £66 millions (25 per cent. devaluation). The satisfaction felt on the Stock Exchange was rather like the sigh of relief we utter when a friend "passes on" after a long and painful illness. No one enjoyed watching France suffer from an insane monetary policy. I remember incurring the wrath of some of my Socialist readers when I criticised M. Blum and pointed out that his policy of inflating internal costs with a fixed and overvalued gold exchange would not work. Devaluation or Communism was the choice before France, and personally I am very glad that M. Blum preferred devaluation. By this act he has probably saved Western democracy. The financial and economic gain to France will be enormous. The Treasury will pocket a gain of Frs. 17 to 25 milliards on writing up the gold stock of the Bank of France. French exporters will now compete on level terms in the world's markets and the large "invisible" income from tourist traffic will begin to flow back.

* * *

The technique of this currency adjustment is interesting. None of the devaluing countries is attempting to fix a final devaluation, for that would be impossible while sterling remains unstabilised and the American President reserves power to devalue the dollar a further 10 per cent. France and Switzerland, however, have committed themselves to minimum and maximum devaluations (France 25.19 per cent. to 34.35 per cent. and Switzerland 26.6 per cent. to 35.2 per cent.). Switzerland has even gone further and indicated, provisionally, a stabilisation of 30 per cent., which is roughly equivalent to the new exchange rate of 21½ to the £. Only Holland has refused to commit herself to even the widest gold points. Her intention is, apparently, to manage her exchange after the fashion of Great Britain and to refuse to stabilise until the pound is stabilised. When the exchanges opened, the Dutch guilder moved to 9.0 to the £, which is equivalent to a devaluation of only 18.8 per cent. Dealings in the French franc at the moment of writing have not yet opened, but it is expected that the authorities will attempt to peg the franc near to the minimum rather than to the maximum devaluation. As the extreme limits of French devaluation are known it is possible to calculate the range of the new sterling-franc parities at various dollar-sterling levels (assuming that the American price for gold remains at $35 to the ounce). These are shown in the following table:

With $ rate at :—	Sterling-franc parity would be: Maximum (franc at 43 m'grammes)	Minimum (franc at 49 m'grammes)
5.00	114⅜	100⅜
4.95	113½	99½
4.90	112½	98⅝
4.86⅜	111½	98
4.80	110	96½
4.75	109	95½
4.70	108	94½

An opening rate of 96–98 has been predicted for the franc exchange, which points to the minimum devaluation (the dollar rate being 4.95½). No doubt there will be a strong commercial demand for francs at the opening, for the recent crisis had caused traders with franc commitments to postpone settlement as far as possible, but I do not anticipate that it will be held at 96–98 when this stored-up demand has been satisfied.

* * *

Personally, I believe that ultimately the franc will move towards its maximum devaluation. M. Blum's policy is to raise wages and increase loan expenditures on public works. A policy of maximum expansion is only compatible with the maximum devaluation. No doubt M. Blum hopes by playing with the minimum devaluation to frighten the refugee capitalist into bringing his capital home, but I doubt whether he will succeed in bluffing the cynical rich. If there is a probability that the maximum devaluation will be required I cannot see the French capitalist hurrying home with his money. The Swiss authorities appear to take a similar view of their refugees. They have declared that the freedom of Swiss gold movements is to be maintained; in other words, to tempt the refugees home, they feel it necessary to allow them to fly again.

* * *

Generally speaking, the devaluation of the European gold *bloc* will ultimately be interpreted as a bull point for equity markets throughout the world. Political considerations apart, the last remaining drag on world recovery has been removed. The policy of cheap money and public works which has been so successfully applied in Great Britain, Sweden and America, can now be adopted in the areas of economic blight. Enlightened expansionism replaces unintelligent deflation. This does not mean that an inflationary rise in commodity prices will be seen. Now that all Governments are practising monetary control they will do their best to check an undue rise in prices. Nevertheless, apart from such international commodities as may be temporarily affected by increased competition from the devaluing countries, the trend of commodity prices remains upwards. This is the main cause for confidence on the part of the business man. As far as our markets are concerned there are few securities which are affected directly, either for good or ill. Speculators are inclined to buy Southern Railway preferred and deferred stocks in anticipation of better Continental traffics, or Unilever shares in the hope of better Continental business (although sterling shareholders will lose the benefit of the gold premium in their sterling dividends). On the other side, some textile shares may be sold in anticipation of French competition.

* * *

Gold shares, so far, have been alternately bought and sold. The bulls argue that the European devaluations point to a *de facto* stabilisation of gold at a price not lower than 140*s.* per ounce. The bears reply that the hoarded gold will either be thrown on the market in London or shipped to New York (dollars, being sold to pay for the gold, will depreciate in terms of sterling and so lower the sterling price of gold). I have no doubt that the new Exchange Stabilisation Funds will be glad to acquire any gold thrown on the market by hoarders, but some uncertainty about the price of gold will remain until the dollar-sterling rate settles down. Contrary to popular opinion, no agreement has apparently been reached between the American and British Treasuries for a provisional stabilisation of the exchanges. It has even been rumoured that Mr. Neville Chamberlain pressed for a rate of 4.75 and that Mr. Morgenthau held out for 4.95. The old parity of 4.86⅜ is now clearly indicated as a compromise. The only understanding which Mr. Chamberlain reached with Mr. Morgenthau is said to be concerned with the technique of Exchange Fund operations. Now that France has put an embargo on the export of gold, sterling cannot well be "managed" unless the American Treasury agrees to the earmarking of gold against purchases of dollars by the British Exchange Fund.

* * *

In January last I called attention to Consolidated Signal on account of the extraordinary discrepancy which then existed between the price of its ordinary shares at 85*s.* and the price of Westinghouse Brakes and Signal ordinary shares at 60*s.* The break-up value of Consolidated Signal, whose sole asset is a holding of Westinghouse shares, was then 127*s.* 6*d.* To-day the market quotations are 67*s.* for Westinghouse and 131*s.* for Consolidated Signal, which now has a break-up value of approximately 140*s.* Interest, however, shifts rather to Westinghouse because it is difficult to acquire Consolidated Signal shares (never a free market), whereas there are available at the moment Westinghouse Brake and Signal Shares around 67*s.* for settlement on November 19th. Westinghouse has just closed its financial year with record earnings estimated in the market at about 30 per cent. As I mentioned in my previous note, it seems reasonable to anticipate a dividend of 15 per cent., which would allow a yield at 67*s.* of £4 9*s.* per cent. For a company with a full order book, and distributing perhaps only half its earnings, this yield is attractive. Incidentally a dividend of 15 per cent. on Westinghouse would enable Consolidated Signal to pay 30.4 per cent. To yield 4½ per cent. on this basis Consolidated Signal would have to rise to 135*s.* On account of the freer market I now prefer Westinghouse.

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